

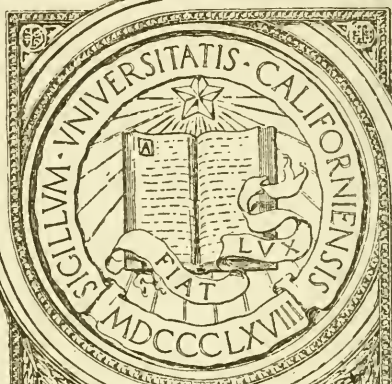
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DUBLIN ESSAYS

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BY ARTHUR CLERY

MAUNSEL AND COMPANY, LTD.
DUBLIN AND LONDON. 1919

145458

ABSTRACTED TO THE
JOURNAL OF THE ROYAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL INSTITUTE

PR
6005
C59

TO
VINCENT CLARKE

PREFACE

I have called these, *Dublin Essays*. They have been written and published in this city over a period of twenty years, perhaps the most interesting years in its history. They deal with the problems of politics, of art, and of letters, as they come to one who works in the city and lives its life. The revival of art and of national life that Dublin has seen in the first two decades of the twentieth century has been extraordinary. Those who have lived through the period scarcely realize it. A native theatre, a native literature, and a new courage of nationhood have been its manifestations. The most sluggish Irish heart has felt a quicker pulse. Unless the judgment of living men upon themselves is wholly wrong, the age of Pearse will, in after time, have a glory like the age of Pericles. These essays can have only a faint reflection of that glory, but they have been written in the golden days. Such as they are, they embody the ideas of half a lifetime, ranging from the hope and exuberance of the student to the more cynical and perhaps less true outlook of middle life. Dealing with many topics, some of them far enough afield, they will be found to have a common thread. They are an expression of the thoughts of the native Irishman, by one who is himself a native

PREFACE

Irishman—most people who write about Ireland are not. Except for the last two, which are now first published, they have appeared in the Press that native Irishmen read, most of them in *The Leader* or *Studies*; two of them in *The Irish Educational Review*; one of them in the *Irish Review*. Two of the essays deal with those hatreds which it is thought bad form and certainly bad policy to mention. But it is hoped that the reader will receive what is new in this book with complacency, what is old without boredom.

ARTHUR CLERY.

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THOMAS KETTLE

Kettle is gone. After all, he was probably the most brilliant mind of his generation, the generation that succeeded Parnell and Yeats. He had not the brilliant originality of Griffith, the deep social insight of Moran—that clearness of vision that could effect a revolution by mere writing, the political capacity of Devlin, still less the unbending, Cato-like uprightness of his murdered kinsman, Sheehy-Skeffington. His chance of continued memory is of course, far less than that of the patriot dead of Easter Week. He claimed no high place as a poet; he certainly was not an economist. But he had a quality of brilliance proper to himself that no one else of his time quite possessed. It might be described as a great breadth of intellect, combined with a marvellous capacity for suddenly mobilizing the whole of his intellectual forces upon a narrow front. He never attempted, certainly he never carried through, any work of broad conception and full achievement like that of Erskine Childers or of Paul-Dubois, which he edited. Now and then he formed projects, to write a historical novel about the fall of Tara, or to publish a treatise on Irish economics (he had, I think, made some progress in the latter). But at his death he left behind him only two small original works that had attained to hard covers—*The Open Secret of Ireland*, a brilliant pot-boiler, and that collection of supremely good essays, *The Day's Burden*, in which, with one exception, the best of him is to be found. It would be easy to collect another volume almost equally good from his miscellaneous writings.¹ But his literary output in

¹ Such a volume has since appeared.

any permanent form was a small one. This is the common fate of brilliant Irishmen who write to be read by other Irishmen; of J. F. Taylor, for instance. A public much inclined to book-making, but steadily averse from book-buying, chills any long hope in an Irish writer, and drives him inevitably to journalism. The Irishman who would write for posterity must write for export, as Lecky discovered. His case was, indeed, rather a favourite illustration with Kettle.

The accepted principle of "*De Mortuis Mendacia*" would be specially foolish in Kettle's case. He was far too big a man to have his memory fobbed off with that mendacious panegyric, which is commonly the meed of the middle-class dead. His character was much disputed while he lived; and if his memory survive, the dispute must inevitably survive with it.

That coloured speech which is styled oratory is of its essence a Swiss: it may attack to-morrow what it defends to-day. "Hannibal" Plunket, for instance, delivered quite as cogent and imaginative an oration in prosecuting Emmet as in opposing the Union, or pleading for Catholic rights.

This severe criticism, which Kettle in his last and best writing, the preface to the *Irish Orators*, passes upon the eighteenth-century Plunket, is certain to form the model for criticism upon himself. Men will point out that he began his career by writing seditious poetry for the *United Irishman*, a journal of which the later *Sinn Féin* was merely a milder recension. Most Irish writers, and certainly most Irish poets, begin in that way. I doubt if Kettle was ever, except perhaps in his very earliest youth, a real disciple of Emmet; he was too much the politician. Like many another who believed himself to be walking in Emmet's footsteps, he got a bad shock when he came upon someone who was not merely in Emmet's footsteps, but in his shoes. Kettle was at all relevant

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times a constitutionalist, with a highly developed dramatic sense; and I am convinced that within the limits in which sincerity is at all possible to a practical politician Kettle was, in all his actions, thoroughly sincere.

In the period between the end of the Parnell split and Sir Edward Carson's assembling of his Provisional Government, which proved the beginning of a new era in Irish politics, three schools of thought flourished among native Irishmen. First, there was the orthodoxy of the Irish Party, tracing its apostolic succession from Davitt and Parnell. It was powerful and popular. But its followers too often came to look upon Faith—Faith in the Party—as an all-sufficient substitute for personal good works. Over against them were the “good workers” of various descriptions—language revivalists, industrial revivalists, men who devoted themselves to Irish poetry, Irish music, Irish pastimes, Irish drama, or Irish Art, many of them then looked upon as heretics, or at least schismatics in matters political. Of this movement, or series of movements, to which the name “Irish Ireland” came to be applied, Moran was the prophet, or as he would put it himself, the philosopher. But there was also a third movement, which never advanced very far, but which influenced many thinking minds. A casual observer would describe it incorrectly by some such loose adjective as “socialistic.” It was the effort to apply cosmopolitan ideas of regeneration (often without any very clear idea of what they were) to the social conditions of Ireland, more especially to the social conditions of its cities—in fact, an aspiration towards modern “progress” of the less brutal kind.

Kettle's effort in life was to combine the first school with the third—Party orthodoxy with social advance. He was, as Mr. Lynd has put it, “European” in his sympathies. With the second

movement, on the other hand, with everything that could be described as "Irish Ireland," though he sometimes gave it a nominal support in words, he had a very *minimum* of agreement. He looked upon it as insular and un-European. He was quite alive to the fact that his own family was not one of Gaelic race. He was fond of playing cricket. He looked forward to that progress which should be borne to Ireland across the seas. But above all, strange though it seem in a man who was destined later on to give up his life for a cause, he had no sympathy with that idea which lay behind all "Irish Ireland" notions, that the way to advance a cause is by each man doing his own part, irrespective of his neighbour's backwardness. Kettle always thought in multitudes. He sought for broad effects. If he did a thing, he blushed to find it was not fame; not through vanity (he had less of the vice than the common run), but because he realized that this *was* the way to *do things*. And he had in a high degree that capacity for saying and doing things in a manner that attracts public attention, which is the first essential of political success.

With Kettle the idea of "*Progress*," beloved of the last century, was almost the dominant enthusiasm. The men of the nineteenth century had certainly better reason to speak in the name of Progress than those of our time. Kettle was beyond all else a "modern," a "progressive." He hated the cynical attitude, and had a particular detestation for the ideas of a man like Belloc. He believed in politics and in party. He was always on the look-out for the newest thinker, the freshest enthusiasm. He liked German philosophers and Russian novelists. He had at all times a leaning towards socialism; in a celebrated phrase he said that he agreed with everything in socialism except its first principle. He was by tradition a strong democrat. His political ideals are brilliantly expounded in his essay

on the *Philosophy of Politics*, in which, improving on John Morley, he deals with Politics as the science of the *second worst*. Kettle's disposition towards things "liberal" and "modern" was so strong that if he had been brought up in a different religion, or perhaps even in a different country, he would not improbably have been a Free Thinker. As it was, like many other Irishmen of advanced social ideas, he was a believing and enthusiastic Catholic. He always confined his social and political enthusiasms within the limits of Catholic discipline, though he rather delighted to march up to the boundary and look across the wall, or perhaps one should say—for he was a mountain-climber—to look down from the edge of the cliff. He often shocked timid people.

In his private life he had that virtue which a native Irishman only loses when exposed to foreign influences—he was a man of the strictest purity. Indeed, in the many years of my association with him I think I never heard him tell a doubtful story or even make a doubtful remark. To another different orthodoxy he was no less faithful, though here again he liked to walk upon the edge—the orthodoxy of Party discipline. It was much the heavier restriction. To a man of Kettle's idealistic temperament the discipline of the Irish Party in the period of his connection with it, must often have been a severe strain. But he never even considered the idea of breaking away. He made the best of an unenthusiastic lot. He was a member of the Ancient Order of Hibernians. He confined his speculation and his political action alike within practical and permissible limits.

From what has gone before there is little difficulty in understanding the enthusiasm with which Kettle espoused the French and British cause on the outbreak of the war. They were the champions of all that was progressive and modern. The Czar he

regarded as the apostle of Polish freedom : his poem has attained some celebrity. For once he was wholly free to champion the cause of what was progressive and modern without any fear of incurring ecclesiastical censure or the displeasure of party leaders. He threw himself heart and soul into the campaign. Many men faced death ; Kettle faced unpopularity, a much harder thing for a politician to do. Indeed, he probably looked upon the sacrifice of his own life as the lightest sacrifice which he was called upon to make.

When I first met Kettle he was a small boy with a treble voice, with his interests divided between cycle-racing and winning Intermediate prizes. He was good at both. We came to Clongowes from different day-schools. As his father had been "detained" by Forster in the Frongoch of these days, he was naturally a hot politician. His study was Mathematics ! He took German instead of Greek. Seeing that the publication of Intermediate results is now looked upon as a crime, almost fit to be restrained by the Press Censor, it may be interesting to remark that Kettle was a "First Place in Senior Grade," one of three from the same school in four years. He had "Anthony Wharton," the well-known dramatist, and a high public official in Dublin as his predecessors in the distinction. He played up hard at the school games. He used to say in later years that his taste for literature dated from a "fallow" year in which he had no examination ; indeed he constantly complained that he had been over-worked at school. Dublin boys were not very popular at Clongowes, and, like other hard-working students, Kettle had little influence. He moved in a set that devoted itself to cycling. His satirical humour had already begun to develop. But the most vivid recollection of him I possess is a speech at the school debate in which he maintained

that the man who died on the battlefield died better than the man who died in his bed with the consolations of religion. In those days the sentiment caused a sensation; and he found it necessary to make a sort of recantation.

It was at the University that he first came into his own. His University course was not indeed a specially distinguished one. As the result of bad health and bad management in choosing courses he failed to repeat the academic distinction of his school-days. He eventually graduated in Philosophy. But he at once became a power among the students. His first achievement was characteristic. Mr. Pierce Kent, the present Secretary of the Insurance Commissioners, who was a friend of his, was a candidate for an elective position in the religious sodality of the students. Kettle composed an election address and a poster, "VOTE for KENT and CHRISTIANITY," which at once carried the day. Soon after Kettle was elected auditor (as in Dublin the student President is called) of the students' Literary and Historical Society; a few years later found him editor of *St. Stephen's*, the new college paper, which was "unprejudiced as to date of issue," as its editor happily announced. It may be remarked in passing that, seeing that it was popularly supposed to afford no true education whatever, the old University College of the Catholic University succeeded at this period in producing a remarkably large number of persons who, to put it no higher, have got the public to talk about them. Trinity College has no one but Hannay to show in the same epoch.

The most remarkable episode of student life with which Kettle was connected, though only in an indirect way, was the famous seizure of the University organ by the students during Lord Meath's Chancellorship. Kettle had no part in the actual

occurrence; he was not even privy to it, though it is understood that a detective, mistaking him for another gentleman of literary appearance, identified him as having been there. Kettle, however, having, like Alan Breck Stuart, the special advantage of being innocent, immediately took up the running. He at once caught the public fancy by a speech in denunciation of the University authorities, in which he announced his intention of burning his degree! The upshot of the business was that the attempt to punish the students failed, and the Chancellor resigned.

Kettle's connection with the College paper led to his founding an institution, which brought him out at his best, the Cui Bono Club. Recruited mostly from the staff of the old paper, its dozen members met periodically for the discussion of "all subjects save such as were silly or indecent." Kettle was the Johnson of the Club, its acknowledged dictator and wit. In such circumstances his brilliant parts showed at their best—his lambent humour, his clever dialectic, his extraordinary personal charm, his marvellous skill in telling a story. Most of its members were clever men with distinguished careers, but Kettle was the sun of the firmament. He was in after years greatly attached to this little foundation, and looked upon it as a sort of oasis of friendship in the parched plain of politics.

Politics was soon to claim him. His first serious entry into this field was made in 1905 as a political journalist, as editor of the brilliant but short-lived *Nationist*. After a few cases, mostly political defences of cattle-drivers, Kettle wearied of the Irish Bar, to which he had been called. He had, indeed, manifested his old skill in examinations by taking a law-prize at King's Inns. The only enduring result of his legal experiences is his clever sketch of an assize-court in *The Day's Burden*, from which the following characteristic passage may be quoted:

Then, as you look up at the bench, your eye is caught by a veritable decadent touch—the Judge's flowers. I do not know whether it is part of the ritual or not, but I have never been at Criminal Assizes without seeing that incongruous bunch of flowers—this time they are ragged, white chrysanthemums in a vase of blue china—beside the inkpot in which the judicial pen is dipped as it takes notes of the evidence or records the conviction. It reminds one of Baudelaire's *Fleurs du Mal*—Blossoms of Evil.

But, after all, you may expect anything of the Judge. He is a wild symbolist. He wears scarlet to manifest the wrath of the law and ermine for the purity of the law—a spotted purity, to guess from the specimen before us—and a black cap by times for the gloom of death.

Politics was and continued to the end to be the real enthusiasm of Kettle's life. For a very short time he was attracted by Mr. Arthur Griffith's "Hungarian" policy of passive resistance, to be known later by the famous title of "Sinn Féin." A new propaganda always fascinated him. But he soon conformed to Parliamentary nationalism. He was, to all appearance, a sincere convert. If he ever afterwards had any leanings towards extreme opinions, the opposition he received from Irish extremists in the U.S.A., when he went there some time later as the envoy of the Irish Party, fixed him in the constitutional view and made him ever afterwards very bitter against the extreme party. It is interesting to note, however, that in his "Philosophy of Politics" he maintains the moral right of Ireland to rebel, "if it were possible." This brilliant essay, already referred to, was first read as a presidential address at the Young Ireland Branch of the United Irish League. Seldom has a pronouncement containing so much political philosophy, so many

abstract ideas, been read before a branch of a working political organization in any country. But then the famous and much-abused "Young Ireland Branch" was a political assembly of a very unusual kind. This is not the place to discuss the fortunes and merits of that ever storm-tossed foundation. It is sufficient to point out that the youthful Kettle had the merit or responsibility of being its founder.

Kettle's fortune was exceptional in one way. He was the only young man of abstract ideas (or at least with a capacity for expressing such ideas) to make his way into the Irish party since the Parnell split. The men of this type belonging to his generation for the most part turned their energies into other channels and became either indifferent or openly hostile to the Irish Party. Kettle's amazing success in Parliament shows what a man of ideas can achieve if he is once allowed to get a start. A young and unknown man, without influence or political backing, he began to take his place with men like Redmond, Balfour and Asquith as a debater. He made an immense impression upon Young England, an England that was unfortunately never destined to grow up. Of course I cannot speak at first-hand of this period of his career, which began in 1906, but the secret of his Parliamentary success would seem to be that he threw aside traditional clap-trap and thought out at least new modes of expression for himself. His early mathematical training also came to his aid, and he showed an unusual command of figures. The Irish University Bill was the Parliamentary measure with which his name will be especially connected. But a man in the twenties only attains success of this kind at the price of much jealousy and ill-feeling, and Kettle was by no means the man to allay feelings of that sort. For he was neglectful of the smaller courtesies of life, and he was not at all an easy man to work with.

He had accepted a professorship in the new National University, for the establishment of which he had worked hard. As the subject (National Economics) was off the beaten track, he had few students and the duties were not heavy. There seemed, however, to be a certain inconsistency between holding a whole-time professorship and being a Member of Parliament; so, after a short interval, he sent in his resignation to the Irish Party. It is now generally understood that he had counted upon the Party taking a line in this matter which would enable him to withdraw his resignation and remain in Parliament. But if he had any such hope, he was destined to a severe disappointment. He was allowed to go. (Grattan, as a politician, says Kettle, in his last writing, "committed the two deadly sins, which are to sulk *and to retire*.") From this forth Kettle's career was simply a career of despair. One or two hopeless attempts to get back into politics only served to darken the gloom. A man familiar, as he was, with the realities of politics could never devote himself to the nonsense of political economy. "Economics," he used to say, "is not a science, but a series of controversies with a fixed terminology." You cannot expect strength of character from a man broken with despair. Some of his former political associates must have felt strangely when at the last Kettle became the martyr of their principles.

Apart from that quality of intellectual concentration already referred to, Kettle's greatest literary asset was an intense brilliancy of phrase. In this he had something of the skill of Grattan or Tacitus. Speaking of Grattan, he might have spoken of himself when he said:

The epigrammatist, too, and the whole tribe of image-makers dwell under a disfavour far too

austere. We must distinguish. There is in such images an earned and an unearned increment of applause. The sudden, vast, dazzling, and deep-shadowed view of traversed altitudes that breaks on the vision of a climber, who, after long effort, has reached the mountain-top, is not to be grudged him. *And the image that closes up in a little room the infinite riches of an argument carefully pursued is not only legitimate but admirable.*

As with *A Kempis*, so you will best appreciate Kettle if you read but four or five of his sentences at a time, the five just quoted for instance. You can make them the subject of a long mediation. Often a single sentence of his is enough to stand by itself. "Cynicism, however excusable in literature, is in life the last treachery, the irredeemable defeat." Or again—"It is with ideas as with umbrellas: if left lying about they are peculiarly liable to change ownership." There is always a combination of the sardonic and the imaginative in his writings, a kind of eloquence that is the more effective for being eternally self-critical. Consider this description of an orator:

The sound and rumour of great multitudes, passions hot as ginger in the mouth, torches, tumultuous comings and goings, and, riding through the whirlwind of it all, a personality, with something about him of the prophet, something of the actor, a touch of the charlatan, crying out not so much with his own voice as with that of the multitude, establishing with a gesture, refuting with a glance, stirring ecstasies of hatred and affection—is not that a common, and far from fantastic, conception of the orator. But when the fire is become ashes, and the orator too; when the crowd no longer collaborates; when the great argument that transfigured them

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is a paragraph in a text book, yawned over by schoolboys. . . ."

This is Kettle at his best. Or take again this short and brilliant description of the State. Like the modern composer who deliberately introduces a discord, Kettle gets his effect by the misuse of a single word :

The State is the name by which we call the great human conspiracy against hunger and cold, against loneliness and ignorance; the State is the foster-mother and warden of the arts, of love, of comradeship, of all that redeems from despair that strange adventure that we call human life.

One other quotation will show him in a political vein. It is from his article, "On crossing the Irish Sea":

Ireland has been finally conquered at least three times; she has died in the last ditch three times; she has been a convict in the dock, a corpse on the dissecting table, a street-dog yapping at the heels of empire, a geographical expression, a misty memory. And with an obtuseness to the logic of facts which one can only call mulish, she still answers "Adsum." Her interdicted flag still floats at the masthead, and, brooding over the symbol, she still keeps building an impossible future on an imaginary past. English parties in turn wipe her for ever off the slate of practical politics. . . . New battalions loom up to the right wing or the left; and the Tory press remembers the phrase of the Confederate general "There comes that damned green flag again!"

You must go to Swift himself if you would find one to surpass Kettle in that peculiarly Irish quality, sardonic enthusiasm.

Kettle's greatest defect, if in a politician it be a defect, was an almost complete incapacity for appreciating the point of view of an opponent. Many of his speeches that "stirred ecstasies of hatred" are to be so explained. One could not find a better example of this weakness than his chapter on Ulster in that otherwise clever work, *The Open Secret of Ireland*. His treatment of the subject is tremendously unfair; it is simply a collection of brilliant insults, "annual brain-storm," and the rest, each cleverer and more unjustified than the one going before it. On the other hand, he was a man of the very greatest personal magnanimity. He often required magnanimity in others; he always showed it himself. He had never the least difficulty in making up with an opponent however bitterly they might have quarrelled. When William O'Brien, the subject of his bitterest satire, for a time rejoined the Irish Party, Kettle was quite sincere in declaring that the past was not only a sealed book, but a burnt book. And it is but a few months ago since, chancing to meet him at an intimate's house, he had a very friendly interview with Eoin MacNeill.

The last time I met Kettle was a few weeks after Easter 1916. He was driving in military uniform on a car with his little daughter, and stopped it to speak to me. I congratulated him on his preface to the *Irish Orators*. But his whole conversation was of MacDonagh and the others who had been put to death in Low Week, of the fortitude they had shown. He felt very bitterly, and he spoke of their fate with that wistfulness which Mr. Lynd also noticed. I think there must have been a time in his life when he looked forward to die as they had died. He died in a different way and for a different cause. But the idea of final self-sacrifice was as much a haunting desire with him as it was with Patrick Pearse.

A GAELIC UNIVERSITY

There must be few things which an ordinary man finds it harder to believe in than Universities. They seem to him collections of persons, whose energy is less than the average, whose practical capacity is enormously less. Their labours have no result visible to the naked eye. Football and boat-races, or, in other countries, duelling clubs, with an occasional glimpse of infirm old men in queer gaudy costumes complete the concept. And this is the sort of thing he is called upon to reverence and, what is worse, to pay for. The answer usually given is to point to the great importance attached by sane and sensible men in America, Germany, and other countries to the provision of University education. But there is a still better argument, the great importance that was attached in our own country to not providing it. It was men equally sane, and in a narrow sense equally sensible, who made it the settled policy and business of their lives to deprive the great bulk of the native population of Ireland of any reasonable facilities for higher education for over three centuries, who after two centuries of open bigotry throughout the third were satisfied to assert that the provision of education for one hundred odd persons was a supply sufficient to meet a demand which we now know to have been that of nearly two thousand students.

These things did not happen in the distant past, or even in the eighteenth century. It is only within our own life time, that in conditions the most hampered and degrading that can be imagined it was for the first time made possible for an Irish

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Catholic to possess a University degree and a conscience at the same time. The men thus educated have taken a big part among the newer generation in the events of our time. It is less than ten years ago since the long continued campaign to exclude, or practically exclude the native population of this island from higher education definitely failed, a campaign of exclusion which many men made the eager and long-sustained enthusiasm of their lives, which broke ministers, which drove governments from office. No greater testimony can surely be given to the importance of University education in Ireland than that those who sought our degradation should have thought it of such high importance to prevent it.

The denial of higher education to those who formed the bulk of the native population, though in later days it seemed an isolated anachronism, was once part of a great and broad policy, a policy set forth in two volumes. When the long denial of higher education to Catholics was ended, we had only come to the end of the last chapter of the first volume. The policy as originally contemplated was to bring about unity of religion and unity of language in England, Scotland, and Ireland. The attempt to bring about religious unity between England and Scotland soon failed. The effort to enforce religious unity between England and Ireland, with consequences that men of all religions now admit to have been disastrous, continued down to a fairly recent date. It is less than half a century since it was definitely given up; indeed the results of the economic pressure, applied during two centuries to bring it about, endure down to our own day. We are not, however, concerned to discuss them here. We have to deal rather with the second volume, the other half of the policy, the determination to enforce unity of language in the three countries.

In this endeavour State Policy has been far more successful. It has often been said that it is hard to conceive a system of persecution worse than that inflicted upon those who practised the Catholic religion in Ireland. Bourke's description of the Penal Laws, "a machine of wise and elaborate contrivance; and as well fitted for the oppression, impoverishment, and degradation of a people . . . as ever proceeded from the perverted ingenuity of man," has become a commonplace. It is indeed hard to imagine anything worse. But if anything may be put beside it, it is the vigorous persecution of those who practise the Irish language as their native tongue, a persecution whose severity is only less evident in our day because it has come so near to achieving its end, because there is nowadays so little resistance, because there are so few Irish speakers left to persecute. No doubt an Irish-speaking man who speaks no other language than Irish is not liable to have his land taken from him by his son who conforms to English. He can own freehold property or a horse worth more than five pounds. He can, if nominated (though any court would be slow to appoint him) act as guardian of his relative's property. So far his position is better than that of the Catholic in the eighteenth century. But only so far. An Irish speaker who is only an Irish speaker, is debarred from all public employments whatever, even the humblest, except perhaps that of a private soldier. He could not be a policeman. Possibly he could obtain employment as a scavenger. He cannot be a barrister, doctor, solicitor, engineer or chemist. He could not in practice belong to the ministry of any church, unless indeed he were sent abroad in early youth. No commercial position is open to him except perhaps that of a country shop assistant, and scarcely even this. No education of any kind whatever is avail-

able for him, unless on condition of studying English, which usually means conforming to it.

There are no hedge schools. He might just possibly be educated abroad, if there were money for it, which of course there is not. There is not one single school for Irish speakers in the island of Ireland. But from the Irish speaker's point of view the matter is worse than this. Attendance at schools where English is taught is compulsory. And as the employment of torture is well recognized as a daily incident of all primary and secondary education, Irish children have been literally tortured out of speaking Irish, a process continued for a century. A blow a word was the tariff. Irish has been forced from the lips of Irish boys by whipping their bodies. If a man should regard the exclusive use of Irish as essential to his salvation, his position would be no better than that of the eighteenth century Catholic. Nor is there anything surprising in a man looking on Irish as essential to his salvation. There are in all human probability a great many Irishmen in hell, as I write, who would not be there if they had known no other language than Irish. The only development of the language situation in our time has been that of a greatly decreased resistance, in other words, of the almost complete success of the persecution. About a century ago something like three-fourths of the Irish people were Irish speakers. Nowadays the number of those whose exclusive language is Irish has been reduced to a few thousands. If Polish were the language, and these things were done in Poland—perhaps like things used to be done. But the persecution can scarcely have been so unmitigated. In the circumstances it is not surprising that the use of Irish as a native language has declined.

Some such discussion as this having arisen at a meeting, I once heard that strong Unionist, the late

Lord Justice Fitzgibbon, give this as an answer: "Who gave up Irish? Wasn't it the Irish themselves?" The suggestion has a fractional truth, but it has no more. In all the matters of which I have spoken no representative, that is, no popularly elected Irish body has ever had the smallest say. Before we blame the Irish people for the state of things described, we must consider how infinitesimal is the representative element in Irish government. Outside the narrow sphere of local government some degree of hostility to popular opinion is indeed, in practice, a condition precedent to the exercise of any public function whatever in Ireland. Almost the only educational matter on which Irish elected bodies have ever had a say has been the question of "Essential Irish" in the University.

But the real question is not how Irish was lost, but how it is to be regained. How are we to get back our old tongue thus filched from us? Many different systems of teaching and study have been suggested. Personally I believe, and I thus come to the real subject of the article, that you can never make a man Irish speaking by merely teaching him Irish, no matter what method you adopt. In this Irish does not differ from other languages. I may be pardoned a personal reminiscence. Like other classical students, I devoted thirteen or fourteen years to the severe study of Latin and Greek, my living depending on it most of the time. And yet I can't speak two sentences of either language, and I never met a classical student who either could or would. The greatest Greek scholar of modern times is said to have confessed that he could not read a Greek play with anything like the same ease as a daily newspaper. And if I had been smattering at Greek and Latin by the various easy, improved, rational, direct, phonetic, up-to-date, etc., methods by which I have been nibbling at Irish for the past

twenty years, I really don't believe the case would be much better. In practice I fancy I could, as the result of a couple of mountain-climbing holidays and a phrase-book, make almost a better hand of German, which I never was taught at all. When the mountains are *sehr schwer*, the day *ziemlich heiss*, and you develop an almighty thirst for *kalte ungekochte milch* or *etwas bier*, as the case may be, these are realities. In the same way the only Irish over which I have any real hold is the small talk of an Irish college. C'ádain éáinir? Ráááir as an r'soruirdeáct? An f'éoir leat rinne? Déir á tuille té ááat? Báinne má'r é do toir é—ááur puááí mar rin. These also are realities, thoughts, not mere words. It is no good learning to speak a language. You must learn to think it.

Mention has been made of Latin and Greek. Take, then, the case of an ecclesiastical student who has done his studies in Latin. That man has a real hold on Latin. His acquirements are in most cases far inferior to those of an average classical scholar. He probably does not know a single emendation to Horace or to Aeschylus. He stills looks upon these writers as a poet and a playwright respectively. He is quite unable to tell you the rule of syntax which led Cicero to end his sentence with a subjunctive—“*esse videatur.*” But within the domain of his studies in the world of philosophy and theology such a student will think in Latin. Philosophical and theological ideas will present themselves to him in the language in which he has learnt them. He will even find it a matter of difficulty to translate them into any other. That is to say, he will have a grasp of Latin, which no classical scholar ever has, because what he has been learning is not Latin but other things through the medium of Latin.

If this illustration seems to wander afar it is merely to drive in this truth, the basis of these proposals

that if you want to make a man Irish speaking, you must first make him Irish thinking, that is, you must teach him not so much Irish itself as other things through Irish. If you do, he will at any rate within the ambit of his education speak Irish, as a native speaker does, not because he feels he ought to, but because he wants to, because it's "easier." He will suffer from none of that strain in Irish speaking, which is very often noticeable even in the case of enthusiastic speakers of the language, who begin their conversation or their letters with a few sentences of Irish, like a grace before meals, till at last the surface-tension gives way and they sink back into English. There is very little true bilingualism in the world. A visit to Switzerland or Belgium—countries thought to be bilingual—or indeed to our own Irish speaking districts will show this at once. A man may possess many languages, but he owns only one. If Irish is ever to be revived, we must face a sacrifice, we must drop English, not indeed necessarily as a language of study and acquirement, any more than we need drop school French, but as a language of ordinary use in daily life. As long as we continue to speak broken English—that is all we do speak—with anything like our present facility, we shall never become Irish speaking much less Irish writing. There is a notable difference of principle in these matters between the Gaelic Athletic Association and the Gaelic League, perhaps inevitable in the circumstances. With the G.A.A. a Gael means a man who plays Gaelic football and hurley, and no other like game whatever. But if a man played "soccer" six days in the week, Rugby occasionally, and Gaelic only in odd intervals of time, he would be as much a Gael as the best of us are in language matters.

Of course the Gaelic League set out to achieve a stupendous task. At the beginning of this article

A GAELIC UNIVERSITY

I but faintly indicated the difficulties in its way. The wonder really is that, in less than a generation, it has achieved so much. Even if the Gaelic League should wholly fail in its main object, it would have been of incalculable benefit to the country. Yet though the study and knowledge of Irish—even a little Irish—may have, and has had, the most beneficial results, moral, intellectual, and political, for Irishmen, something else is needed if we are to revive the Irish language. Irishmen must learn to think in Irish; within certain limits they must put away English. To spread Irish thought is a task of great difficulty, in face of the determined efforts that have been made, and the still persistent measures that are adopted—I have indicated their nature—to prevent its spreading. Seeing that those against us are so strong, so well entrenched, it might seem that the way to start the counter-attack was at the bottom in the primary school. But in this case the paradox is the true wisdom. Ideas never begin at the bottom. They come from above. An educational system, if one may use the figure, rests on its top. The men who permitted Catholics to open primary schools, but for a century refused them University Education, saw this truth very clearly. They recognized that a University was, or at least should be, the heart of a civilization—sending a pulse through all its arteries. They hated the civilization. If Gaelic thought is ever to be revived and our old speech thus to be made a living language through the country, something of this kind is necessary. A Gaelic University, a University dealing with all subjects in the Irish language, might be the centre of an intellectual Gaelic revival.

We have numerous Gaelic colleges, most of them admirable institutions. They are perhaps the most satisfactory achievement of the Irish revival, but they all fall short of what I mean. Except in rare

instances, they confine themselves to teaching Irish and methods of language study, which is indeed the business for which they were established. A Gaelic University must have a wider curriculum. It must go on to teach other subjects—Philosophy, History, Economy, Science, Music—through the medium of Irish. It should teach men to think and to think highly in Gaelic; such a foundation has formed the centre of many language revivals, of the revival of the Czech language in Bohemia, to take a single instance. There is nothing fantastic or chimerical in advocating such a foundation for Ireland. Once Irishmen are convinced of its value, there will be little difficulty in setting it up.

The Gaelic College with which we are all familiar might be made the pattern for the more ambitious establishment of a University. Now Irish Colleges conform to two types; on the one hand you have the Summer College, and on the other the College open all the year, which trains its students by evening lectures. Such celebrated foundations as Ballin-geary, Ring, Spiddal, Omeath, and Cloghaneely are of the former type. The Leinster College, the Dublin College of Modern Irish, and the successful Colleges in Cork and Belfast of the latter. The reason that Gaelic study has assumed these forms is that people who study Irish are usually earning their daily bread in some manner and cannot afford to suspend the process during their period of study. A Gaelic University, if it were to be a practical proposition, must be conducted either as a Summer College or by night lectures. It need not suffer in efficiency on that account. The man who studies in his time of leisure is a man of character.

A question which must be decided on the threshold is whether our new Gaelic University should be entirely independent, or should be connected with one of our existing Universities, or

University Colleges, receiving its degrees, adding to and sharing in its prestige. The matter is one for debate, but the history of the Catholic University would seem to point strongly in favour of the latter course. Such sections of the Catholic University as were not able to confer a recognized degree or qualification proved a relative failure, while its medical faculty in which a recognized qualification was available was a distinct success. Suppose for the moment, then, that it was determined to connect the new Gaelic institution with an existing University College, and to adopt the "Summer College" pattern, Galway College, with its pleasant site and Irish atmosphere—Irish is spoken by native speakers up to the gates of the College—would inevitably be the place to select. The term might be from June to October, while most of the ordinary students and professors are away. In an article some years ago in *The Leader*, which worked out the scheme in detail, I showed how it could be done for about £1,000 a year. An initial endowment of about £5,000 would probably be sufficient. While they are waiting for that line of cross-Atlantic steamers, that does not seem to turn up, perhaps the men of Galway might consider the question. You can have a Gaelic University for a fraction of the cost of one steamer, and it will bring as many people from Ireland as the steamer will from America.

The other alternative—and the alternatives are by no means exclusive, both could be attempted together—is to work by night lectures, on the model of the Dublin, Belfast, and Cork Gaelic Colleges. Here there is a clear opening for University education which the Irish movement can seize. Cardinal Newman's establishment of night lectures, leading to a degree, at the old Catholic University was, so it has always seemed to me, one of the noblest acts in his career. He is in truth one of the very few

strangers to whom we in Ireland owe gratitude. To have established these lectures—everyone knows that beautiful conference in which he proclaimed their establishment—may have seemed a small thing. Yet in what it implied it was a very great thing. Remember who Newman was. If ever man could claim the title, he was the flower of English University culture, a culture highly refined but fiercely exclusive. By establishing facilities for University education for the man who was working for his daily bread, whom poverty or family need had sent forth to earn an early living, Newman broke with all the traditions of his time. He cast aside the Reformation and the Renaissance, and went back to the broader and nobler ideas of the Middle Ages, when daily toil and the highest learning were not looked upon as incompatible, when, in fact, the greatest minds of the monastic world regarded the one as the complement of the other. It was the Renaissance and Reformation civilization which first made learning the special preserve of wealth, which divorced it from labour. And if in most modern countries we find below a certain point an immense populace without clothes, without food, without faith, the phenomenon is closely connected with that policy which has made higher learning the preserve of the moneyed classes. Newman, as I have said, definitely broke with this policy. Within the restricted limits in which it was possible for him, he threw open the doors of learning, and many men, living and dead, with honoured names received their education at his classes, what time they worked for their daily bread. The institution which he thus established continued for over fifty years; for it was later kept on by the Jesuits when they came after him. It most unfortunately fell through on the establishment of the new University.

I have suggested that there is here an opening for

the Irish movement. Of course, in what I say I speak only for myself. This is how I see it. As we know, there has been a strong movement to re-establish the night lectures again ; the University convocation has frequently moved in the matter. But so far only very partial success has been attained. Several causes have worked against the movement. But if the night lectures were to be delivered in Gaelic, many objections that might otherwise arise would be removed. There could, for instance, be no question of compelling the professors to do two shifts in the day. The lectures in the Gaelic foundation must be delivered by assistants, enthusiastic young men—who would qualify themselves for the purpose. I believe there would not be the least difficulty in obtaining such a staff if the thing were once set on foot. It would indeed serve as a training ground for the day portion of the University. It may be urged that it is a hardship to ask even night students to attend their lectures in Gaelic. But being matriculated, they have all *ex hypothesi* passed a qualifying examination in Irish. A very little more should make them able to follow lectures in Gaelic. A clerical student, with a parallel qualification in Classics, goes forth to attend lectures in Latin at Rome, or Paris, or Salamanca. The cost of such a foundation would be quite moderate. Its results would be out of all proportion to its cost ; for it would mean that the first great step had been taken towards freeing the Irish mind, the rebirth of Gaelic thought from the womb of a Gaelic University.

A FORGOTTEN VIRTUE

Patriotism, an internal principle of order and unity, an organic bond of the members of a nation, was placed by the finest thinkers of Greece and Rome at the head of the natural virtues. . . . And the religion of Christ makes of patriotism a positive law; there is no perfect Christian who is not also a perfect patriot.

If I am asked what I think of the eternal salvation of a brave man who has consciously given his life in defence of his country's honour, and in vindication of violated justice, I shall not hesitate to reply . . . that death accepted in this Christian spirit assures the safety of that man's soul.—*Cardinal Mercier.*

I wish these words of a great Churchman were put up in every schoolroom of Ireland, beside the Ten Commandments. Cardinal Mercier's famous pastoral must have astonished many people in this country, many religious people. To their surprise they discovered the existence of a wholly new virtue—patriotism. Hitherto they had regarded it as something between a joke and a rather pardonable shortcoming: they spelt patriot with a "h." Now they discover you may be damned for want of patriotism; that Sadleir committed perhaps a less crime, when he took poison, or Pigott when he shot himself than when each of them sold his country. For that is what Mercier means, if he means anything. And the pronouncement of this Belgian Croke is all the more important in that the *de facto Government of his country was, of course, violently unpatriotic*, when his words were written, so that no Erastian taint can infect them.

I have headed this article "A Forgotten Virtue." I believe it has almost been forgotten in Ireland that patriotism is a Christian virtue. I know a man

A FORGOTTEN VIRTUE

who has taken a great part in political Catholic work in Ireland, who is fond of saying that morality in this country is run on one Commandment, like a wheel-barrow. This is of course a wild exaggeration. But it expresses the fact that there are perhaps some chapters of Christian obligation to which we in Ireland are inclined to afford a rather hurried glance. One of these is patriotism. I have been looking through the Maynooth catechism, the whole gospel of religious life for so many in Ireland. The word patriotism does not, I think, occur in it, nor even the idea, in any clear way. The nearest it seems to get to it is in referring to Ireland as being "our island" or at least as having been "our island" in the year 432 A.D.

I wonder if it ever occurs to people in Ireland that you cannot lead a Christian life if you leave out one virtue altogether, that you cannot atone by any degree of formal piety for such an omission. Suppose a man living in grave moral sin were to go to Benediction with great regularity and be assiduous in his attendance at sermons we should view his conduct with disgust. If a man has got a job by selling his country, to instance the commonest form of anti-patriotism, what are we to think of him when he turns devotional, as he usually does in Ireland? If Mercier is right, the man is living in sin.

Or again, take that old man to be found in one or more of the secondary schools in Ireland, who has devoted his life to suppressing the patriotic impulses of his students, to turning them away from the study of Irish, to training them for jobbery and emigration, what will God say to such a man when he comes before the judgment seat, let him have been ever so devout, *if Mercier is right*? Will he be sent to hell for his anti-patriotism? How many young lives must such a man have blasted by quenching that spark of patriotism that would have kept their ideals

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pure and their spirits upright. How many public-house loungers or worse have to thank such an anti-patriot for their degradation?

It has always struck me as surprising that our big Colleges take with entire equanimity the fact that a substantial portion of their students, as they would express it themselves, "go to hell" within ten or twenty months after leaving them. It is clearly a direct result of their training. Does this happen to boys of the same ages from the Christian schools to the same extent. I have seldom met a boy from the Christian schools who, whatever his other defects, had not a really deep religious faith and a true purity. I am told (I have not had the same opportunity of making observations) by employers of labour and others, that at the other end a similar difference may be observed between boys trained by the Christian Brothers and boys trained in the National Schools. The former have the Christian virtues. For all this there may be several explanations. But I suggest that one is that the virtue of patriotism has never been omitted from the list by the Christian Brothers. It is a grave thing to train a man in life and leave out even one virtue, especially if it be the organic body, the principle of order and unity.

Christianity must be accepted as a whole. Christ Himself chose to come before us as a patriot. His Crucifixion was brought about by one of the meanest crews of anti-patriots that history has ever seen.

In conclusion, I may point out that this article is written throughout on an assumption. It assumes throughout that Ireland is our country.

AS IN 1800

(Written in the winter 1914-1915.)

We have the *Freeman* of a hundred years ago. What a pity we have not the *Independent*. If we had a file of the pages from 1780 to 1810 (supposing it to have existed in those times) it would surely make interesting reading; Lord Clare's efforts on behalf of the Empire against French militarism; Mr. Grattan's latest speech; Wolfe Tone's letter on the back page. The present situation is singularly like that in the last twenty years of the eighteenth century, the day of Irish Independence, in which Liberalism was to find itself finally submerged and extinguished in a European war. You have first the black days of Irish slavery, in which the spark of a constitutional movement begins to glimmer. It soon becomes a fire that sweeps the country. Then come the Volunteers and the Irish are strong. (It was principally an affair of Palesmen, yet, politically and economically, it was for Ireland as a whole.) The cause of Ireland triumphs. Liberty is won, in so far as freedom can be built of paper. The Act of Renunciation guarantees Irish liberty, as the Home Rule Act guarantees it to-day. And the Volunteers are there to make it a reality. But the politicians grow afraid of the Volunteers; an armed force does not square with their political theory. The patriot party in the Volunteers, led by the Protestant Bishop of Derry, are defeated at the Rotunda Convention, and the Volunteers, still numerous, become but a splendid shell, with the soul gone out of them. The more vigorous spirits keep

the soul but lack the body. Forsaking constitutional paths—for the Volunteers were a strictly constitutional, and in the best sense a loyal organization—they become “United Irishmen.” The country does not follow them.

All this happened in the days of the Irish Parliament in the space of a few years. We have seen it happen in the space of one, with this difference, that in the present instance Catholics, with a handful of Protestants, were the actors, instead of Protestants with a handful of Catholics. Will the sequel in our time be different? What ensued in the time of the Irish Parliament is shortly told. Once the national forces were broken up or enfeebled, Irish liberty was at the mercy of its enemies. Lord Clare and his Orangemen played their part. The very patriotic enthusiasm of the “United Irishmen” which made them enemies of the Irish Parliament and Constitution, helped to bring about the catastrophe. The red flag appeared in the national ranks, and frightened the respectable classes. War without and a rising within terrified men’s minds and ruined the influence of the constitutional leaders. Reaction and military outrage reigned supreme. In vain Grattan proposed to re-assemble the Volunteers, when it was too late. Soon the Irish flag was lowered in Dublin, and the Union Jack floated in its place. Grattan left for Westminster to denounce Napoleon and make fruitless efforts on behalf of Catholic emancipation. There is, as I have said, a striking resemblance between the two situations. Few things seem more certain than that the enemies of Irish liberty are waiting the opportunity for their counter-stroke now, as they did then. Their acceptance of paper Home Rule has been too ready to be permanent. Such a counter-stroke is in such circumstances almost an axiom of politics. And when it is delivered in six, or twelve, or

twenty months from now, in what plight will the Irish forces be found ? The prospect is not pleasant. The same symptoms of corruption are appearing in the Press as in the days that preceded the fall of the Irish Parliament ; there are even some signs of their extending to public life. By alienating their more enthusiastic members, the constitutional leaders have emasculated the national forces. The official Volunteer movement must inevitably perish for want of aim and enthusiasm. Napoleon's phrase about the importance of moral factors applies as much to Volunteers as to regular soldiers. On the other hand, the action of the dissident enthusiasts, like that of the "United Irishmen," will probably play, unintentionally, into the hands of Irish enemies. Cut off from the body of the nation, they must tend to become ever more and more extreme in their views and actions. Finally, I suppose some outrageous wrong will be put upon John MacNeill, and he will then become a national hero, before whose shrine future generations of Whigs will drop a grain of incense as they pass in to dinner. Twenty years hence there will be appreciative articles about him in the *Saturday Telegraph* and the *Cork Weekly Examiner*. The constitutionalists will call out for Volunteers when it is too late, and find there are none. You cannot resist Carson with a company of Crown Prosecutors.

IS IRELAND A COUNTRY OR A COUNTY?

I ended my last essay, but one, by saying that it was based on the assumption that Ireland was our country. This was not sarcasm. It was a very necessary reservation. At the moment of writing¹ probably a majority of the inhabitants of this island do not believe Ireland to be their country; and, taking Mercier's doctrine to be right, it is just this fact that will save many of them from hell, a sort of invincible ignorance. For the man who believing Ireland to be his country is false to the duties of patriotism, is to be numbered with the murderer and the adulterer.

But there are a great many minds into which the idea that Ireland is their country, the centre and the focus of patriotic effort and emotion, has never entered; into which it could not enter. This is the case with the vast majority of Protestants. Ireland a nation seems to them as ridiculous and evil as Purgatory or convents. It is not that they do not love Ireland, every stone in it. They look upon it as their county; they love it as a Corkman loves the Mardyke and unstraightened Patrick Street. But they regard a proposal to give it a separate parliament and government with much the same feelings that the average Irishman would regard a proposal by Mr. William O'Brien to give Cork a separate parliament, an attitude of derision verging into speechless indignation, as the outrage seemed to come within the bounds of possibility.

¹1915.

No man can have two countries, certainly not if the idea of country has attached to it the grave obligations to which Mercier and other thinkers bear witness. What a man looks upon as his country usually appears from the language he uses. If he looks upon Ireland as his country he will use such words as "nation," "national," "patriotic," "our country," "our history," and the collective "we," as referring to his country, Ireland. If, like the Irish Protestant, he looks upon Ireland as merely his county, he will use these words with some other reference. His collective sense will not go beyond football matches—Rugby football matches.

A country is a land inhabited by a nation. I think it was George Wyndham who said that the proof that Ireland was a nation was that men were ready to die for her. He was not an Irishman; nor did he die for Ireland. Yet he came near enough to both to taste the splendid bitterness of patriotism. The blood of her martyrs has been the testimony of Ireland's national faith. That strange lamp of love has kept alight through seven black centuries. Who ever yet died for a county? Who would go forth to shed his blood for a county council?

To Protestants Ireland has long been a county and no more—a unit of racing or Rugby football. A thin line of stern Protestant patriots has at all times stood apart from the views of the overwhelming majority; they have not shaken them. But the astounding thing is that from half to a third of the Irish Catholics have now of a sudden come round to the Protestant view. They still want, or profess to want, or even hope for, a county council in College Green—an Irish Parliament without an Irish nation would be no more—but they have in reality accepted the Protestant standpoint; they hold the Protestant language. To them, Ireland is neither country nor nation. The *quasi*-patriotism of the East Ulster

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man for Ulster is an immeasurably deeper and stronger feeling than is theirs for what they once thought to be their country.

Since the time of the Protestant Reformation, no such fundamental change upon so vital a principle has ever been carried out so quickly—O'Connor's curve. In the one case as in the other the strange suddenness is apparent rather than real. In the case of the Protestant Reformation, the immoralities and infidelities of the *Renaissance* had long been sapping at the minds that seemed of a sudden to lose the Catholic Faith. In our time we have seen a parallel process. When Croke made his famous prophecy about the effects of English pastimes, he was only a few years out of his reckoning. Men laughed at us when we said cricket was the enemy, music-hall songs were the enemy, Sunday papers were the enemy. We were told you could be Irish without Irish. Now the thing is done. The explosion has followed the long undermining. The Protestant Reformation was not the work of the people, it was the work of a body of politicians and of a well-to-do middle class, influential enough to make their voice heard on behalf of the whole nation, to suppress the life-long devotion of the silent poor. And the change appeared for a time a small one. The same clergy prayed in the same churches. Only the language seemed to have altered. Changes that are vital and fundamental are often the last to be perceived.

THE JUSTICE OF THE BRITISH DEMOCRACY

(Written in 1907)

“Ireland’s chances of political redemption lay in the strength of the appeal which she might be able to make to the deep sense of justice which undoubtedly existed in the hearts of the British Democracy.” I have forgotten the name of the gentleman who spoke these words, if I ever knew it. He presided at a recent Home Rule meeting. A chairman thus reported must display striking brilliancy in his address to induce you to enter on the tedious task of unravelling his identity. This chairman was just an ordinary Englishman, supremely important as a sample, highly uninteresting as a unit. He expressed the views of the ordinary Englishman about his own moral qualities—those views that he has found it so difficult to induce the rest of humanity to accept—clearly and concisely. A Senator lecturing the Sugambri or the Helvetians on the clemency—*nota illa et antiqua*—of the Roman people could not have done it better. He even put into a phrase one of the methods of obtaining self-government that has often been propounded in this country. Perhaps I did wrong to belittle his abilities. It is because I believe his statement has a sort of antipodean importance, as being diametrically the opposite of the truth that I have placed it at the head of my essay.

Ireland has, in my view, absolutely nothing to hope from the sense of justice of the English

democracy, if such a sense, in fact, exists at all. Let me make two reservations. First, I do not deny the possession of a sense of justice to individual Englishmen. They may or may not have one. There may be just-minded Englishmen. Again, it is possible that the lower classes of England, if the Government were really in their hands, might prove less unjust than the upper and middle classes who have so large a share in its control at present. I have felt, on the rare occasions when I have travelled to the Mile-end Road on a 'bus, that the people who mounted the vehicle in that district were much more like other Europeans—in a word, much more human—than the ordinary Englishman of commerce, whom we are accustomed to meet. But we have no real *data*. If you cannot foretell what a political party will do when it assumes office, still less can you judge the future action of a democracy who now revel in the optimism of impotence. But be that as it may, I assert without hesitation that whatever be the sentiments of individuals, whatever be the leanings of the lower classes, as long as the British system of politics and government continues to be what it is, considerations of justice and abstract fairness will count for nothing in the dealings of the English Government with Ireland.

To treat of such a topic as self-government or liberty, in proving this proposition, is manifestly unfair. All men have agreed that robbery on a large scale—what is called “empire”—differs not merely in degree, but in kind, from larceny of a less extensive kind—say, purse-snatching. In the former case, you are entitled to take into account equitable considerations, “whether it is for the other’s good,” which moralists commonly refuse to recognize in the case of the latter. An Englishman may find so many authorities to justify his detention—I use a neutral term—of Ireland, India, or Egypt, that one cannot

reasonably call him unjust if he be persuaded by them. But there are other matters in regard to which a like difference of opinion does not prevail. Savage chiefs, for instance, commonly believe that if they enter into a compact, bringing them great advantage, they ought to keep it.

The Act of Union was such a compact and the English can scarcely plead their own fraud as a defence to claims based upon it. By that compact the English agreed to grant the Irish two advantages only; first, a certain fixed number of representatives in the House of Commons; secondly, a rate of taxation based upon certain ascertained principles. As to the former, a majority of the House of Commons, including a very great majority of the English representatives, have more than once manifested their desire to diminish it, the treaty notwithstanding.

The history of the latter is not very different. The just contribution of Ireland according to the principles enunciated in the compact was ascertained some time since by a tribunal appointed by the English (Liberal) Government to be one-twentieth of the whole. With the knowledge of that fact before them, a contribution, never less than one-fifteenth—that is to say an excess of twenty-five per cent.—has been exacted by the English Government from the Irish people from that day to this. No relevant excuse has been offered. Henceforth, the Irish contribution will be raised to nearly *one-thirteenth* of the whole.¹

The fact is that Ireland's financial case has nothing but abstract justice, arithmetical justice, behind it, and justice doesn't count. Your Englishman expects

¹ Mr. T. M. Kettle's interesting figures, showing that, owing to the recent increase of English wealth by half, the Irish contribution should, on Union principles now be only *one-thirtieth*, is not in point for my present argument. [What would be the figures now?—A.C.J.]

you to see the humour of such arguments, just as he does. You might as well propose the evacuation of Egypt. If there were some way of backing up the claim, some way of hitting back, then he would be at once alive to the force of your case. In fact, to put it bluntly, there is but one way of affecting his conscience, and that is by kicking his body. Of course he will try to hit you back, but he will go away feeling sore and, in a certain sense, conscience-stricken. That is the English sense of justice.

I have spoken of finance, because the proof was mathematical. But precisely the same considerations apply to self-government. Nothing has ever been got and nothing ever will be got—minor measures apart—except by giving trouble. Gerald Balfour's concession of Local Government came nearest to an exception. There is no new method in Irish politics. There are only alternations of slackness and activity. And it is as hard to obtain anything from an Englishman's sense of justice to-day as it ever was.

COULD OUR RELIGION BE RUSHED ?

(Written in 1915)

The Irish nation has been driven from one line of defence after another. Many centuries ago the strong rampart of political independence preserved its integrity. But all trace of that has vanished, vanished two hundred years ago. Next there was the language. No serious breach was made in that strong line of defence till about a century since. Then that line, too, was broken through, and there was a general retreat upon the next, the line of political nationality. We had neither language nor independence, but we still held out; we claimed to be a nation on other grounds; our history, our traditions, our distinctive insignia, the separateness of our political thought. Men differed in their conceptions of political expediency; there was a right wing and a left; but there was a unity in the whole; the centre was very strong; the position had been so long held that it seemed impregnable. Now this line has been broken through in its turn, and the national forces are again in full retreat.

The Irish nation is in fact thrown back upon its last line of defence, its religion. Should that perish or be impaired, even the name of Ireland will be forgotten. And the thought that keeps persistently occurring to me is, could this line, too, be broken? Can it be held indefinitely when so much else has been abandoned? The position is enormously strong. Against any frontal attack it is impregnable. Could

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it be taken in flank? But a few months ago the political position seemed scarcely less strong, the green flag firmly nailed to the mast. I do not say the thing will happen to-day or to-morrow. But could it happen? If you let others do your thinking, you may find yourself thinking strange things. A nation that takes the *Daily Mail* for its breakfast and an English Sunday paper for its Sunday dinner, may one day find a change in its Friday menu.

I conceive the thing as coming to pass somewhat in this wise. Last autumn I spoke of the process of cold-shouldering the Pope. Since then matters have gone further. Instead of praise for the true Christianity of the greatest of Christians, attacks—unanswered attacks—on the Pope are now a regular feature of the Irish press, both Unionist and non-Unionist. Sniping the Pope would be the more correct description of the existing practice. The idea that the Pope is something apart from the Catholic Church, though not put into words, is indirectly conveyed. Now suppose some great crisis were in the future to arise in the Church. If France were to go into schism, for instance, a thing never wholly off the cards.

An enormous body of opinion in Great Britain would receive such a happening with enthusiasm, an enthusiasm far greater even than that which greeted Garibaldi's efforts in our fathers' time. English public men might or might not write pamphlets on "Vaticanism"—there would surely be some "ism," at any rate. We should perhaps hear that in breaking with Rome France was fighting the battle for Progress against Obscurantism (I hazard this as the appropriate Graeco-Latin substantive for the occasion). In our fathers' time Ireland had no doubt about her attitude towards this kind of thing. On some matters at least she thought for herself. What would be her attitude

now or a few years hence? I don't mean in a time of profound ecclesiastical peace, but in a crisis, a time of spiritual stress, when perhaps issues were confused—I hope she would stand firm. But frankly, when every other line of defence has been abandoned, I believe the line of our national religion might be subjected to terrible and almost overwhelming pressure. I see things like the following:

THE FIGHT AGAINST OBSCURANTISM

At a meeting at Northampton last evening the Northampton Irish, amidst scenes of great enthusiasm, passed a resolution bidding God-speed to their fellow-countrymen at home in their splendid fight against Obscurantism. The Reverend —, the famous Nonconformist divine, who was accorded an ovation, the audience singing “Nearer My God to Thee” in compliment to him, recalled the magnificent struggle carried on by the early Irish Church, led by Saint Patrick (cheers) against the forces that were now once again setting out to sap liberty and impede the march of Progress. The meeting concluded by singing “Faith of Our Fathers.”

THE “FAITH” REGULATIONS

“Answering an Irish member in the House of Commons yesterday, Mr. Robertson said that the accused, Finlay, had not been deported under the ‘Faith’ Regulations, but under the ordinary law.

“An honourable member: It is real Catholic Emancipation now.”

IRELAND AND OBSCURANTISM; GREAT SPEECH OF MR. —; SPLENDID DEMONSTRATION; ULSTER SPEAKS OUT

Addressing an immense concourse, including six brass bands which played “Faith of Our Fathers”

yesterday in Belfast, Mr. — said: "It was an infamous lie to suggest that the Catholicity of the Irish peasant, aye, and of the Irish citizen (great applause), was less than it had ever been. No peasantry, not even the Russian peasantry, the most religious peasantry in the world, were more devoted to Catholic principles, true Catholic principles, than the Irish were. Let a few obscurantist cranks—there were not many of them, thank God, in this great, free and progressive city—they had no use for them—let a few enemies of Progress croak in their holes . . .

(A Voice—We'll smoke 'em out (laughter).

"The faith of Ireland was as undimmed and untarnished as in the days of their martyred ancestors. But Ireland has taken her stand against Obscurantism, and she would not recede. When did Irishmen ever fail to take their stand against Tyranny and Oppression? They were not going to have the Inquisition in twentieth-century Ireland. The ecclesiastic who lived in Spain and called himself Bishop of Rome, would never again bring the unhappy name of Pope to raise dissension between different classes of Irishmen. . . ."

All this perhaps seems a little impossible. Many other things have seemed impossible. I pray God that it may not happen in our time.

THE RELIGIOUS ANGLE IN IRELAND

Ireland is like an examination paper, all questions, no answers. And of these the most difficult, most recurrent, and that which has led to the greatest number of failures is the famous religious question. There is, of course, a religious question in every country, except, I am credibly informed, Japan. But the religious question in Ireland has attained a celebrity beyond that of other countries. For it has been its fortune to come athwart the working of a great empire and now and then bring about a stoppage of the machinery. In so doing it has inevitably made a mighty noise.

The thing itself is very simple, and has scarce anything to do with theology. Even the desire to make converts is comparatively rare among resident Irishmen; proselytism in Ireland will most often be found to have an English origin. Probably there is no section of civilized humanity that contains so small a proportion of persons interested in theological problems as the inhabitants of this island. The question is quite a different one.

Yseult and Sir Tristan of old found themselves chained together by an immoral love brought about by another's deed, which no act of theirs could remedy or make less. The modern native Irishman and the British immigrant—the Catholic and the Protestant—find themselves bound inseparably by an immoral hate, not of their own making. Good wishes avail nothing. The thing is fixed, immutable. The individual will is powerless in its grasp; and efforts

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to improve matters have not seldom ended by leaving them worse.

A casual visitor to Ireland, especially if he came in winter-time, might voyage throughout the whole country and notice none of these phenomena. Everybody in Ireland holds language of the utmost broadmindedness and benevolence. There is complete charity on both sides; at most a keen observer might remark that the Catholic charity tends to be of a fraternal and the Protestant of a paternal variety.* So, I make no doubt, one might have visited the court of the excellent King Mark in Cornwall, the British realm of those days, admired the monarch's admirable bass singing, and came away noticing nothing wrong. There are even to be found Catholics and Protestants quite unaware of their real feelings towards each other, but that does not change the feelings.

Perhaps the most surprising aspect of the religious question in Ireland, and yet the one least noticed, is the way in which the Catholic and the Protestant live socially apart. This exists quite as much in Dublin as in the North. It is perhaps less true of the small Protestant communities of the south, yet even there it applies to a certain extent. Socially I happen to belong, I believe (at the time of writing), to something like the middle of the Irish upper middle-class—perhaps nearer the bottom than the top. I have only once in my life dined in a Protestant house. Though I am entering on middle life, and my dancing days almost over, I have never yet been at a dance in a Protestant house. I don't include in this the *menages* that result from mixed marriages; they are neutral ground. Years ago, by an accident, I once found myself at a charity ball organized by Protestants of the middle upper-middle class for some non-sectarian purpose. I found that the only girl I knew in the room was the

only Catholic. With trifling and accidental variations, this is, I believe, the general experience of Catholics of my own class and any classes below it. At the very top of the upper middle class, where the number of Catholics thins out very much, the segregation of faiths is, I understand, less marked; whilst among the very small handful of Catholic aristocrats I dare say the social demarcation would scarcely exist at all. As for the state of things existing in the bulk of the middle class, I have set it out, but I make no complaint. Catholic society is conducted on a like basis of separateness. In Dublin, at any rate, neither religion feels the want of the other socially; each is self-sufficing.

In the market-place, in business life, men of all religions mingle freely. They become firm friends and appreciate each other's good qualities. They lunch together; they drink together; and in one sense they forget the religious question. Yet it is really present sub-consciously all the time. All the friendliness is to a certain extent like the "fraternisation" of soldiers in opposing trenches, the inarticulate protest of human nature against conditions that are too strong for it. A single shot, a blast on the bugle, a tap on the drum, and they rush to take their places in the opposing firing lines.

The *casus belli* is most commonly economic. Apart from Drink, which Protestants make and Catholics sell, there are three great industries in Ireland—(a) Agriculture, (b) Linen-making, and (c) Jobbery. I treat ship-building as subsidiary to the linen manufacture, as in a sense it is. The famous land war was, viewed broadly, a fight between Catholic and Protestant for the control of agriculture, the ownership of the land. Of course there were Catholic landlords and Ulster farmers, but I speak of the broad issue. Sir Edward Carson's celebrated

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unfought war may be looked on as in essence a fight for Linen.

Jobbery, with its yield of near ten millions a year, is scarcely less important than the other two, and the fight to control it is waged unceasingly in a sort of guerilla warfare between Catholic and Protestant. The capture of a judgeship, even a county-court judgeship, is acclaimed as a victory in the official *communiqué* of the day. Above all, the recapture of any position in which the enemy thought he had established himself is a cause of unbounded exultation. In reality the situation does not vary very greatly. The Protestants are very firmly dug into their entrenchments; their supplies are excellent. They can hold out for an indefinite time against the numerical superiority of the Catholics. Part of the line is held by the Episcopalians and part by the even better disciplined Presbyterians. There is always talk of a general advance or a magnanimous peace, but neither has come about so far. The situation may be summed up by saying that the best things in the patronage of the central government are in Protestant hands.

The conventions of this form of warfare are somewhat peculiar. The actual religious fervour or even the speculative convictions of the job-seeker are almost a negligible consideration. Occasional attendance at a place of worship of the religion to which the common opinion assigns him has in a few cases been considered necessary; but, on the whole, public opinion is against any such requirement as tending to confuse the issues, and the filling up of a census paper is thought a sufficient profession of faith. Even if a gentleman were to proclaim himself a disciple of Nietzsche, his appointment to any public position would be duly chronicled as a Catholic or Protestant appointment respectively in accordance with the putative religious opinions

of his family and connections, and compensation demanded on that basis. Up to a few years ago had Mr. George Moore—I don't say that he follows Nietzsche—been appointed to some public position, say a body of public trustees of some kind, he would have been set down unhesitatingly as a Catholic appointment and a Protestant put on to balance him. The actual change of opinions from Catholic to Protestant, or *vice versa* (though viewed with popular disfavour—people were quite hurt by Mr. Moore's defection) is however recognized; Episcopalian and Presbyterian victories are separately chronicled. But outside these limits variations of religious opinions are scarcely taken account of.

The struggle is not, of course, confined to industry and government patronage. Catholics complain that they are in large part excluded from "non-industrial" business, from many branches of retail trade, for instance. Some houses in the hardware and ironmongery business are specially exclusive, Catholics being, on principle, wholly shut out. I do not know whether Protestants have any counter-charges to make in this regard. Protestants have been certainly extraordinarily successful in the retail trade in every part of Ireland. Much of the carrying and wholesale distributive trade of Ireland is for obvious reasons in the hands of actual Englishmen. These form a very important element among the Irish Freemasons. It is usually found that when the mode of entry into any large concern, as a bank or railway, for instance, is by competitive examination it means a great increase in the number of Catholics employed, at least in the junior ranks of the business. Protestants would probably say this is because competitive examinations don't test manners. Good manners are usually a function of average income taken over a long period; and the average Protestant income in the South and West is inevi-

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tably higher than the average Catholic income, as there is no Protestant proletariat outside Ulster. All Protestant barbarians hail from north of the Newry canal. Catholics, on the other hand, would say that their success in competitive examination results from the fact that competitive examination is the only method of choice not subject to corrupt influence.

The play of indirect religious influences in matters wholly unconcerned with religion is a perpetual subject of complaint by Catholics among themselves, and (as far as I can ascertain) by Protestants. When the last Protestant leaves the room the topic commonly arises. Catholics complain that Protestants always "stick together," and that while Catholics give a fair share of their business to Protestants, while Catholic convents, and even Catholic bishops, employ Protestant solicitors and doctors, on the other hand (if one omits the small class of men who in all walks of life are so eminent as to be inevitable), no Protestant tongue is submitted to Catholic eyes, no Protestant brief goes astray; the Protestant purchaser looks for Protestant potatoes, Protestant mutton, Protestant patent medicines. Of course this is a clear exaggeration; but there is a sufficient element of truth in it. Irish Protestants are at least as cohesive in such matters as, say, Irishmen in America. They will in most cases give a preference to a less competent Protestant over a more competent Catholic.

I dare say when the door slams on the last Catholic, Protestants tell each other a different story. They say they are living almost on sufferance among a quasi-hostile population; that they are prevented from succeeding by their religion, or else by the politics that are its all but inevitable accompaniment; if not, they are succeeding against considerable odds in spite of it. They themselves are broadminded, and

save for a few Ulster extremists, take no account of religious differences. Catholics, people like the present writer, for instance, are perpetually harping on them. Irish gentlemen are Protestants; Catholics are, well—many of them very worthy people. If things were in Protestant hands there would be no question of religion at all; and matters would not be in their present pass if the English government had not abandoned the interests of men always faithful to it, who have sacrificed not a little in its service.

I fear I am getting into politics. But the distinctions, of which I write, are in no sense political. I know no men who feel and (when you get them alone) speak more bitterly on religious subjects than Catholic Unionists. By the way, the invariable sign of a Catholic having bitter religious feelings is that he calls himself a Papist. Catholic Unionists are usually full of hatred for Protestants, and can scarcely contain their sentiments about Presbyterians. They have a sort of feeling that it is not reasonable to expect a man to be a Unionist for nothing and that they are not being paid the honest price of their services. Paradox as it seems, such men in the long run often argue themselves into Nationalism along this strange path.

Many remedies have been suggested for the religious evil, that strange paradoxical phrase. Personally I do not believe that either the concession of self-government or "the bloody sacrament of a common battle" will effect any sudden change in conditions so deeply inbedded in the social system. Neither the hind nor the panther will change its spots (if I may be pardoned that bold metaphor), at least not in our lifetime. But these are political considerations. A purely social remedy, combined education, has perpetually been suggested. It is said that Catholic and Protestant pull well together—the words may be literally applied to the boat club—in Trinity College,

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and that if this system were indefinitely extended, religious differences would disappear among old school-mates. In fact, a solution of the University question was prevented for nearly a century by this argument. In all this I disbelieve most thoroughly. My personal experience is that Catholic graduates of Trinity College have, in after life, quite as keen a sense of religious distinctions as anyone else, in fact, often a much keener sense. The happy relations that exist between the Catholic and Protestant undergraduates of Trinity College come chiefly from the fact that a minority of only twelve per cent. is not sufficiently large to excite disfavour or encourage reprisals. If you had forty-seven per cent. of Catholics in Trinity College, as so many would desire, still more if you had fifty-three, there would, I firmly believe, be Tartarus to pay; even as it is the favourable position of Catholic students in Trinity College has not led to any considerable number of Catholics afterwards making their appearance on the College staff. The late Sir Francis Cruise once complained to me most bitterly of the way in which he had been treated (in his belief owing to his religion) in regard to such an appointment. I have, however, no personal knowledge of the facts.

But be this as it may, any general adoption of the system must present extraordinary difficulty. In many parts of Ireland you would have to import an experimental Protestant in order to train his fellow scholars to be tolerant to him. Moreover, it is precisely in those parts of the country where men have scarcely ever met a Protestant that the most tolerant Irishmen are to be found. It may be no more than a coincidence, but the least tolerant come from those parts of Northern Ireland where some slight degree of religious co-education exists.

Again, it is often thought that the best way to meet the religious difficulty is by closing our

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eyes to it. With this I wholly disagree. It is an idea founded upon the pernicious philosophy of Edmund Bourke, the apotheosis of systematized humbug. Shortsightedness is not a cure for any social evil whatever. We must first face facts before we can conquer them.

Another experiment might be more interesting, if it were not plainly impossible. At present one of the few points about which all religions in Ireland are in complete agreement is a rooted objection to mixed marriages. This is probably a large part of the cause of the religious separateness. A Protestant girl who dances with a Catholic knows that she is wasting her time; and why should her mother have fresh tea made and distribute her cakes and scones to a man who is plainly unmarriageable. This consideration runs through the whole social life. Were the impossible to happen, and mixed marriages to come into favour, it would be interesting to discover whether the corrupt motives of family influence would outweigh those of religious preference. An attempt to encourage mixed marriages in this view was, I understand, made in Germany. Here again, however, it is at least doubtful if the result achieved would be quite what was expected. Of every ten bigoted people of my acquaintance, seven at least are the offspring of mixed marriages. One trembles to think of an entire population so recruited.

It is a mistake to exaggerate the degree of religious hatred in Ireland. It is probably less than in other countries. It is certainly less than the hatred between Catholic and anti-Catholic in France or in Germany, and immensely less than the hatred (in normal times) between Catholic and non-Catholic in Belgium. It may be doubted even if the social contempt of church people for Nonconformists in England is not a more cruel and ruthless sentiment

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than any existing with us; the great amount of proselytism, from chapel to church, through interested motives, in England goes to show this. Extensive proselytism is a plain sign of severe persecution. In any event the hatred existing between religions in Ireland is much less than the hatred existing between the different classes in the same religion. Women of different religions do not refuse to speak to each other. Catholic and Protestant do not edge away from each other on a tram, as the middle class man edges away from an artizan. Compare those two events, of which we all know instances, a mixed marriage and a *mesalliance*—which of them causes more commotion and heart-burning in a family? Indeed men who complain of religious bad treatment in a social sense very often say that because of their religion they are being treated as though they were socially beneath the other party. Social contempt they look upon as right and natural. But of social hatreds I hope to treat hereafter. In itself religious antipathy outside Ulster is not intense in Ireland. It is because the line of religious cleavage in Ireland coincides with the line of political cleavage that the two coming together make a jar.

THE PASSING OF UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, STEPHEN'S GREEN

As I write, the end has come. My old *Alma Mater* is no more. A hearse-like furniture van stands at the door to excite the curiosity of the chance passer-by. Strangers called it "Stephen's Green." Among ourselves we knew it as "The College," wherein we differed from T.C.D. students, who make it a rule to omit the "The," and always refer to their place of education as "College." We differed from them in much else as well, and not always, if one old University College man may express his views, for the worse. Personally, I shall never regret that the College, that is just now closing its doors, and not any more famous seat of learning, was my place of instruction, let theorists argue as they will in a contrary sense. If University College of old had any special defect, it was really that it was too true a University, and complied overmuch with the ideal of culture for its own sake. Students from other places of education were, indeed, more likely to succeed in the world, even in the world of educational promotion, just for this reason, that their intellectual training was less complete. That I should thus exalt the training of my old college above that of other universities may, perhaps, be set down to mere filial piety. Yet, if outsiders had known the brilliant and varied college life that existed behind the shabby exterior of the Stephen's Green buildings, they might be more of my way of thinking.

Some of the men of that time are already on the road to distinction, in science, in philosophy, in

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public life, in various paths of effort. Others may never fulfil their early promise. It is all but a memory now. But the college life, which had these men in the first promise of youth as its chief figures was indescribably brilliant and interesting. The period of which I speak began with the return of Father Delany, S.J., to the Presidency of University College in 1897. For some time before there had been a period of slumber in College affairs. His coming back brought about a revival. The first organ of college life to take on a new vitality was the Literary and Historical Society. It had perished in the troubled times of the eighties, and it was now revived largely through the efforts of the late Dr. Coyne, and of Mr. Walter Callan. It was, indeed, the third revival, for the "Literary and Aesthetical," or, as the students dubbed it, "Atheistical," Society of the old Catholic University had perished long since. In the early days of the revival, the attendance was small, and it is on record that, standing orders being suspended, two students once sustained the debate for a whole evening.¹ But the new institution became popular ere long. No human beings were ever so proud of themselves as we, the committee, when we first held a public inaugural meeting, that could vie with those of Dublin University in its splendours. The Society received constant support and encouragement from Father Thomas Finlay and Mr. William Magennis, his brilliant pupil. Upon our young and impressionable natures the intellectual influence of two such men was very powerful, and I think we all strove to imitate them more or less. And no one was a more frequent participant in its debates, and more interested in its welfare, than Father Joseph Darlington, S.J., a man, the kindliness and simplicity of whose character almost hid his real intellectual acumen. Of the whole college staff,

¹ The late Mr. Sheehy-Skeffington and the present writer.

indeed, he was perhaps the most keenly interested in every phase of college life.

The College Sodality also began to excite a new interest. Spiritual positions in connection with it became the object of fierce competition among the students. Concerts also became a prominent feature of college life, and a choral union was soon to spring into being. It was always a moot point whether it was the concerts themselves or the tea and cake which invariably accompanied them that attracted such thronging audiences. The most popular features of the concerts in those days were the Gaelic songs. At the time I speak of, the Gaelic League was beginning to get into its stride, and nowhere was the new movement accepted with more enthusiasm than among the students of University College. Voluntary Gaelic classes became the rage. Sophocles and O'Growney, Higher Plane Curves and O'Growney, Hegel and O'Growney, became the recognized diet of the various classes of students. Ireland owes the College at least one well-known Gaelic singer, Mr. Clandillon. Yet the new movement, by giving us students an ideal, raised the tone of our lives, and an exceptionally high moral standard prevailed among us.¹ There was, at all times, a considerable interest taken in athletics, but we were heavily handicapped in this respect by want of resources, and Stephen's Green, unfortunately, offers no facilities for boating. But the greatest feature of College life, the college paper, *St. Stephen's*, has yet to be spoken of. Many people look back upon it as one of the cleverest papers ever published in Dublin. It was conducted by a students' committee, but Professor Browne, S.J., turning aside from Grammatical and Homeric

¹ Readers of Mr. James Joyce will get a different impression, but this is the actual fact. Among the students of the college about this time were P. H. Pearse, T. M. Kettle, F. Sheehy-Skeffington, Joyce is true as far as he goes, but confining himself to one small knot of medical students he gives a wrong impression of the whole.

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studies, had not a little to say to the conduct of it. It was "unprejudiced as to date of issue," as it once editorially declared, but made some attempt to appear monthly. Humour was its strong point, and it waged unceasing war with the Choral Union. Auditors, too, experienced a treatment in its columns much different from that of the speakers, who talked of their brilliant and suggestive addresses at the inaugural meetings of the debating society. The ladies' column, alleged to be, but not always in fact, the composition of a girl graduate, was a point of much difficulty. Lady students always cavilled at it as being too frivolous.

The rather juvenile staff observed one rule in conducting the paper which showed a wisdom beyond their years. Stability was secured by the remarkable principle (I now reveal it for the first time) that there should always be two *dull articles*. I wonder if, when Professor X received a request to describe his visit to the sources of the Ganges, he had any inkling that he had been fixed upon by the staff as the writer of one of the *dull articles* for the coming month. Yet, so it was. It must have been the neglect of this saving principle that eventually caused the subsequent college trouble, in the course of which the journal perished after a comparatively long and brilliant career. But, if I were to speak further of the old college, and tell of a dozen other societies and institutions that flourished there from the Chess Club to the Vincent de Paul Society, I should become garrulous. It was a brilliant chapter in life to be looked back upon. When the old University College is in the present month absorbed in a new and more extensive institution, the book will be closed. As I pass by the old place, now occupied by new men with new problems, I shall think a little, wondering if the college men, in their new circumstances, will have as bright, as brilliant, as full a life as we had in the old time.

THE PLAGUE OF B.A.'S

(Written about 1910)

I am a B.A. It is a deadly distinction. About a year ago a father asked me to which university should he send his son. (When he asked this question he had of course made up his mind to send him to Trinity.) To none at all, quoth I, and thereby astonished him. And in truth the great advantage of night lectures, such as I spoke of recently, is that they educate a man without incapacitating him. They provide food for the mind, without simultaneously withdrawing it from the body. I have known a man who had taken First Class Honours in his Degree and First Place in his year, bitterly regret that he had not entered for some small Civil Service Post on leaving school.

What, indeed, is your B.A. to do when he doffs his rabbit-skin hood? He is no nearer a living. He is too old to start medicine. It would take him another five or six years, and entail a large expenditure of money. If he have capital, he can, in another three years, join the overcrowded, but sometimes lucrative, ranks of the solicitor's profession, but even for that he is a little old. Then there is engineering, for what it is worth. He is not likely to find a vocation for the Church. If he has exceptional examination ability, and about two hundred pounds, he can have a shot for the Home or the Indian Civil Service; the Home Civil in most cases involves emigration. He is, of course, hopelessly unfitted for a commercial or industrial career, unless he has one already made for him by his father. He may

know political economy, but he can't work a letter-press, and very possibly is incapable of answering a call on the telephone. Merchants and industrials unconnected by family ties simply don't want him, and have no intention of undertaking the difficult task of his business education. And, even were he not too old, a bank would at once fight shy of his personal appearance. In practice three careers remain open to him: the Bar, journalism, being an M.P.

As regards the last, I shall say nothing more than that it seems distinctly easier to decide to be an M.P. than to become one. Personally I have never made any effort in that direction, but I should fancy that a University degree would be, if anything, a hindrance. Whilst as for the Bar, it is rather like going to Monte Carlo—ten or twenty to one against making a fortune, three or four to one against even getting your money back. Some of the most successful barristers, as, for instance, the present Recorder of Dublin, who was leader of the Common Law Bar in his time, never proceeded to a B.A. degree. As for journalism—well, all I can do is to give Mr. Punch's advice. Even in England literary journalism will soon be a thing of the past.

Can this state of affairs be changed? No greater nonsense was, indeed, ever uttered than to say there are no educated Catholics to fill public positions. The fact is, that the positions are there, the educated Catholics are there. They are never introduced to one another. The element of truth in the statement is this, that younger Catholics being seldom employed in respectable positions in the public service, when you come to look for middle-aged men to fill important positions, you naturally discover few Catholics among the men in the normal line of succession. If anything were wanted to prove this, it is the number of really brilliant Catholic men

who have been ready to bury themselves, at meagre salaries, in the wretched pigeon-holing of the Four Courts offices, just because this is almost the only piece of public patronage open to Catholics for which a higher education is a qualification. The grievance in this respect has in no way been remedied in recent times.

But after all, the main purpose of education should not be to produce Civil Servants. Is *practical* education in a real sense feasible? I must say I have my doubts. The new University would, it was hoped, afford a practical education, but I see no signs of its doing so. The faculty of commerce is the only attempt in this direction. And personally I shall be much surprised if it produce one graduate per annum (not being a man with a family business behind him) who shall succeed in making his living out of either commerce or industry. Like the American colleges, it is, I fancy, far more likely to turn out teachers of commerce than commercial men.¹

Descending from the level of Universities, even in the lower branches of education, *practical* education seems either to be found impractical, or else to be very little attempted. Take our secondary schools, for instance, not to speak of any more skilled employment, they do not devote themselves even to giving a practical education to clerks, which so many of their scholars must afterwards become. To a clerk, apart from reading and writing, just three subjects are practically useful: addition, shorthand, and typewriting. The first is commonly taught badly, the second and third very often not taught at all. Pure geometry, on the contrary, the bane of the Irish mind, which is calculated to ruin a man by making him logical, is a much favoured subject of

¹ Experience is showing that the results of the commerce faculty are fairly hopeful.

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education. The real problem of "bread-studies" is entirely unsolved, and, indeed, very little regarded.

There is, however, a class of practical education of a different kind, the education that makes a man practical in the sense of being good for himself without being good for the community. A spice of blackguardism is, I venture to say it, almost necessary to real success in this country, blackguardism either of the militant or the merely passive description. Of course there are exceptions. What else did Charles Russell mean when he defended his emigration from Ireland on the ground that most of the men he had seen succeed there were mean men, passive blackguards as I would call them. He saw that the type of successful men and of good citizens were, in this country, almost opposed. Had he analysed the situation further he would probably have said that the alternatives before an Irishman were treachery, poverty, or emigration. For himself he chose emigration. It is, after all, but a disguised form of treachery.

THE SECT OF THE GAEL

It is no uncommon thing in movements that after a time men forget whither they are moving. The means swallow up the end. In a certain sense this has happened to the Irish movement. Copies of the *Philosophy of Irish Ireland* would need to be distributed at intervals. (Could some such body as the C.T.S. be induced to bring out a penny edition to meet the difficulty?) I am sure I could bring together quite a number of well-intentioned persons who would tell you that the Irish movement had for its object to promote temperance by setting up Irish classes as rivals to the publichouse, or something of the sort. Nothing is more irritating, indeed, than the condescending approval of persons who bless the Irish movement on moral grounds *only*. Parnell once said of the land movement, in a famous phrase, that he never would have taken off his coat to it had it been only a question of the land, and few Irish Irelanders would ever have taken off their coats to the language movement—and they did take them off—had it been merely a matter of O'Growney. The revival of our language was adopted as an essential element of national freedom—intellectual freedom—and its object, as set forth in the *Philosophy of Irish Ireland* for instance, was to make Irish the ordinary medium of communication between Irishmen. It was a purpose extraordinarily high, extraordinarily difficult of attainment. And we need not be disheartened if we have not wholly attained our object. The enterprise might fitly be described as miraculous, and though the Irish movement has

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achieved many miracles, it has not wrought that one *yet*.

The result has been quite otherwise. It is nonsense to say we use Irish as our ordinary vehicle of conversation. We don't. Most of us have only broken Irish and are never likely to have anything else. The bad English we ordinarily speak is our *effective* native tongue, and is (illusion and sentiment apart) likely to continue to be so during our lives. I succeeded in keeping up a conversation for twenty minutes last summer with a man who knew no English (a very intelligent man), but that kind of thing brings matters no further. If Ireland is to become Irish-speaking it requires a further miracle, and such may yet occur, but what has happened up to this is of quite a different kind. In fact, if one might put it so, the Gaelic movement in Ireland has brought about a result something like John Wesley's movement in the Church of England. He set out to reform the church to which he belonged, and only succeeded in creating a new sect of nonconformists. The Gaelic movement has in fact created a sect of men of pure lives and high ideals, but leading a life quite apart from the general body of the population, who look upon them for the most part with benevolent wonder. As I heard a well-known Gaelic Leaguer put it at a meeting some weeks ago, Gaelic Leaguers are a body as much estranged from the general life of the people as are the Jews.

Now to have brought into being a body of very good young men speaking rather bad Irish, young men becoming middle-aged too often nowadays, is an excellent thing in itself. They are a valuable asset in the community. But it is very far from the ideal of the Irish movement. Unless you can operate upon the lives and manners of the general population your movement has been a failure. Gaelic Leaguers have often been compared to early Christians—every

sect makes that comparison—not always with a complimentary motive. The problem I would suggest in this article is, is it time to come out of the catacombs, even though there be an inevitable loss of early Christian virtue in doing so?

In all Irish morality, “don’ts” figure much more largely than “do’s.” It is not surprising then that “don’ts” occupy the most prominent place in Irish Ireland morality. The proportion of the one real “do,” namely, “learn Irish,” is quite small by comparison. How many books of O’Growney would be a compensation for one cricket match, for instance? Not that I in the least favour that absurd exotic, cricket. But you will never in our time get the general public to live at the intense pressure of Irish Ireland morality or I am greatly mistaken. Most of them shrink from treading that high narrow path on which one false step means destruction. And as they grow corpulently old their disinclination increases the more. Yet, on the other hand, the fight for compulsory Irish showed that the general body of the nation were whole-heartedly on the side of the Irish movement, and that in fact the “Philosophy of Irish Ireland” had become the philosophy, though not as yet the practice, of Ireland as a whole. Can it be made the practice? Is there any method of taking advantage of this new situation? The average man is on the side of Gaelic. Can he be made Gaelic in a full sense? The existing apparatus of the Gaelic League does not, I fancy, provide any means for doing so. It is too *hard* for the average man to live the life of a Gaelic Leaguer. There has even been a reaction against the Irish movement in many directions. Irish songs, for instance, have been almost banished from the concert stage; Irish singing and dancing have been shut up like a beleaguered garrison within the fortress of the League itself. Is it possible to effect a sally without abandoning

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the fortress? That is the question, and though I have started the problem, I do not profess to solve it.

Let me take a single example. Take the case of hurley, a magnificent game, with a wealth of tradition behind it, yet absolutely cold-shouldered by the upper middle class. Suppose you wanted to introduce hurley into Blackrock College¹—I can speak about that institution with a mind wholly unbiassed by the facts, as my acquaintance with it is only such as can be derived from the top of a tram. I suspect that it would not be really difficult to introduce hurley into that college by a strong effort, if that were all you wanted, if you confined yourself to the “do.” But if you wanted to bring in a “don’t” as well, if you wanted them to give up their Rugby, they would see you much further than the Irish movement has yet progressed. This is but a type of the whole. The number who admire principles is very large, but the number who are ready to exchange pleasures for principles is quite small, perhaps because they have bartered so many pleasures for food and clothes and lodging already. If you want a wide extension for a movement, you must sadly limit its comprehension. If, on the other hand, you go in for Logic and Jansenism, you will spend your efforts at Port Royal. The most rigid disciplinarian in the severest Order never yet prescribed the same rule for the laity as for the religious.

¹ I understand it has been lately introduced.

RUGBY FOOTBALL AND THE "CONDUMNIUM"

I hope "Condumnium" is right. Unless there is a misprint in the book from which I take the word, it signifies the state of things existing in those European monasteries, where some of the monks lived according to the harder Irish rule, and others followed the easier rule of Continental monasticism. The result was in every instance what might be expected in such a case. Human nature won the day. The easier rule triumphed, and before long Irish monasticism disappeared, leaving nought save a name behind it. But this is not an essay on monasticism. Rather it is about Rugby football and things of the sort.

I was not at the famous "international" where "we" won the other day. I should like to have been, but stayed away in churlish virtue. However, I almost got the effect of being there by lunching at a restaurant where everybody else was going, meanly explaining "I hadn't got a ticket"—oh! thin pretence of ascetic patriotism! Two other facts have recently floated into my conscience. I was looking at a photograph of a "soccer" team the other day. I happened to know six of its twelve members. (I am counting in the draped secretary.) Of the six, four to my certain knowledge and a possible fifth were expert in Gaelic, *i.e.*, not Gaelic football, but the Gaelic language. Some of them were indeed of exceptional expertness in this subject. The same evening I met perhaps the most Gaelic person of my acquaintance. He is equally versed

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in Irish language, music, dancing, etc. He can play hurley. He wears a kilt. He is a Volunteer, and thereby, of course, incurs a liability to many years' imprisonment. He is, to my certain knowledge, a true enthusiast. He announced his intention of playing in his first Rugby match, whereupon we trousered hypocrites cast up our eyes, and one that was there upbraided him. It was much as if he had announced his intention, let us say, of getting married in a Registry Office.

Nów this is the "religious" conception of Gaeldom, pure and simple, and the question is whether it is a wise one. As we all know from the green catechism, if you refuse to accept any one doctrine, you might as well, for practical purposes, reject all the others as well. That is the characteristic of religion. And it will be observed that the doctrine of Irish Ireland is worked out exactly on this basis. A man may think, speak, dress, fight, sing and live "Irish-Irishly," but if he playeth Rugbically, it profiteth him nothing. A man living in cricket is living in sin. I knew a poor man indeed, a real hero of our own country, whose greatest asset in life was a leg-break, and he gave it all up and resigned himself to a life of inactivity on principle. Many saints have done less. Fortunately tennis, though ever suspect, is not, I believe, yet definitely and clearly on the index; perhaps the memory of the tennis-court oath saves it. As for golf, I only know a single Gael who is a golfer; I know quite a number of golfers who are ex-Gaels. And this is natural. As things are if you give up one point you give up all. The religious conception of being "Irish-Irish" drives out an enormous number of persons, who perhaps differ on but a single point of practice, as I am sure that in the South Seas there have been many who felt that they would willingly embrace the doctrines of the missionary if only he would accommodate them on one point; if he would

withdraw his objection to their consuming the leg of a well-cooked baby occasionally. The illustration, of course, begs the question. Even as it is I know among the younger men of to-day—brought up in a later school than us elders—a surprising number of examples of combination and partial performance, cricketers who dance Irish dances, “soccer-playing” Gaelic Leaguers, Irish-speaking and kilt-wearing Rugbyites, and the rest. The question is, should this tolerance of view and practice be extended and the “religious,” *i.e.*, “take-it-or-leave-it” conception definitely put aside. By the way, why is it always the unimportant points that are most insisted on? No one insists on a member of the Gaelic Athletic Association speaking Gaelic in the same way that it is insisted that an Irish student shall play Gaelic. Reverting to the case of my kilted friend, if every member of the Gaelic Athletic Association, who suffered from a cosmopolitan clinging to trousers, were to stand condemned, what would be its membership?

All of which brings us back to the “condumnium,” the system of take your choice and go as you please, with which I started. But the result in former times was, and if no preference be given to Irish things, would I believe be again, that things Irish would be wiped out, not because they were worse, but in most cases because they were better and therefore harder. For the whole tendency of West-Britainism is to reduce everything to a flat level of dullness. You might almost take the dull flat waltz¹ substituted for the figured Irish dance as the type of the process. The English song, be it drawingroom or music-hall, empty of thought and music, but easily popular, is another example of the same tendency. Moreover there are tremendous forces consciously

¹ Nowadays the “one-step.”

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employed against things Irish. The national battle of England is waged incessantly and in all directions at the same time. Catholic students may play English games. It is not through accident that Trinity College plays no Irish ones. Indeed a Gaelic Leaguer might be tempted to say, only that it isn't Irish, *Que messieurs les assassins commencement.*

If an American baseball team visits Britain and seems to threaten hurt to British national pastimes, there will not be wanting a British editor to ridicule or denounce them. Nineteen-twentieths of the power and wealth of the English in Ireland is of set purpose directed against native Irish institutions of all kinds. Its force is so great that it induces a like hostility among the wealthier Catholic classes. The remaining twentieth patronise them patronisingly. Hence I believe we dare not accept the free "condumnium." On the other hand, the "religious" conception of Irish Ireland has been carried too far, and has led to our more than losing in numbers what we have gained in force and effectiveness. In my view the attitude of absolute compulsion (with virtual excommunication as its sanction) should be dropped, and no more than that "decided preference" which we claim for our manufactures ought to be demanded for our institutions. But it must be a real preference, and the great difficulty is to secure this. Let not a man be excommunicated for Rugby football, any more than for Danish butter; nay, even though he combine the study of Irish with a taste for low music-hall songs, a combination far from uncommon, let us still cherish him. But see to it, all the same, that there is a real preference for Irish goods, Irish games, and Irish music sufficient to countervail the English attack.

One other interesting point remains. A friend recently said to me: "The exclusion of Ulster is the logical outcome of your Irish Ireland ideas.

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You have, in the terms of logic, increased the comprehension, or 'connotation' of the idea of Ireland, this has inevitably decreased the 'extension' or 'denotation' of the idea. If you are to have a full concept of Irish nationality, a concept, full with language, history, religion, music, life, how can the Protestant music-hall-going, 'soccer'-playing, English-thinking, Ulsterman be brought under it? The inevitable result is exclusion." But this raises too broad a problem to deal with further in this essay.

SOME LIES OF EARLY IRISH HISTORY

History we all know becomes offensive if it has any smell of fact.¹ The statement that history is "the lie agreed upon" is indeed a paradox that has by this time almost mellowed into platitude. Professor Kettle has merely improved on it by setting it down that Irish history is the lie *disagreed upon*. To this I only object that the disagreement does not begin soon enough; it does not go back much beyond Strongbow. I hope to deal in this article with some disputed points, or points that ought to be disputed in a still earlier period.

It is, to begin with, a question whether the man of the old stone age ever reached Ireland. Most probably he did not. Ireland was, however, certainly in the full tide of the civilization of the new stone age.

But we may pass by these matters as they have no direct bearing on present day politics. The same cannot be said of the next point how far the Irish nation are a Celtic people. From Matthew Arnold to Mommsen more appalling nonsense has been written about the Celtic characteristics of the Irish people than perhaps on any other known subject. By the way, to make a momentary digression, have you ever noticed how this particular kind of thing is worked, as regards the ancient Romans for instance, you can always have it either way. "The cold,

¹The references are to *The History of Ireland* by Arthur Ua Clerigh, K.C. (Fisher Unwin.)

impassive *Roman* remained seated in his curule chair unmoved by the taunts of the Gaulish invader," or if you prefer it, "His hot *Italian* nature could brook the insults no longer; he felled him with a blow." Head I win; harp you lose.

Celticism, we are told, is the second dose of original sin, and the other party of English critics who deign to patronize us only improve on this by saying what an attractive thing sin is, even if it be original, and even though you have a double measure of it. What a delightful, impracticable people these Irish are; how lovable their Celtic temperament. As a matter of sober fact, until the new French Professor in the National University is appointed, probably the only real Celt left in Ireland is the French Consul, if he be a Celt.

Your true Celt—the only variety recognized by the scientific ethnologist—is the black-haired, bullet-headed, sallow-complexioned man of the comic papers, who saves his money and cherishes his dinner in the centre of France. There is not improbably a considerable admixture of these among the dark, green-eyed population of England, the normal type of Londoner for instance—the fair-haired, blue-eyed Saxon is a pure myth—but none of these Celts ever reached our shores. They would have had to get round Great Britain to do so. When they set out on their travels they preferred to cross by Dover and Calais. There is, indeed, a considerable brunette population, short in stature, along the southern and western shores of Ireland—the Spanish, or, as uncomplimentary critics, and perhaps rivals, call it, the "Danny-man" type—but they are not Celts. They are descended from the dark non-Celtic, long-headed races who lived along the Mediterranean, especially in the South of France, and came by sea to Ireland.

It is from the extreme north of Europe, however

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that the most important element in our population, the Gaels (or Milesians) came to us. Still blue-eyed and long-headed, and in those times fair-haired, or even red-haired, they are almost certainly a Teutonic people. The whole centre and eastern seaboard of our country was settled by them. Save only for a further admixture of fair-haired northmen, they have maintained their type down to our own time. It is from the mingling of the dark race with the fair that the type of black hair and blue eyes, which, when it occurs, is the most striking type of Irish beauty, comes about. Gaelic, which is of course a Celtic tongue, seems at all times of which we have any account to have been the common language of both peoples, both before their coming to Ireland and afterwards. But the one thing definitely established about them, as about the darker inhabitants of our western shores, is that *they* were not and consequently *we* are not Celts.

The next historical romance I wish to investigate is the great anti-clerical story of the destruction of Tara. The anti-clerical *chiffonier* has always been an eager delver in the field of early Irish history, hoping ever to find there the ammunition of present-day controversy. The story of the destruction of the centre of Irish unity by St. Ruadhan upon a trifling scruple seemed naturally an effective addition to his armoury.

The story is ordinarily told in this way: "Guaire gave a stroke of his sword to the king's spearman and took his head off. This Guaire was half-brother to St. Ruadhan of Lothra, to whom he fled for protection. The saint made a hole in the floor of his hut and put Guaire into it. When the king arrived, the king saluted Ruadhan with bitter words, saying it did not belong to one of his cloth to shelter a man who had killed the king's sergeant, and prayed that there might be no abbot or monk to succeed him at

Lothra. 'By God's grace,' said Ruadhan, 'there shall be abbots and monks for ever, and there shall be no king dwelling in Tara from henceforth.' The king asked where Guaire was. 'I know not,' said Ruadhan, 'unless he be where you stand,' for so he was indeed, under the king's feet. The king afterwards had suspicions, searched, found Guaire and took him prisoner to Tara, Ruadhan followed him, and on his refusing to release Guaire, Ruadhan and a bishop that was with him, took their bells, which they rung hard, and cursed the king and place, and prayed God no king or queen ever after would or could dwell in Tara, and it should be waste for ever without court or palace, as it fell out accordingly."

The fall of Tara is in reality not to be explained by this absurd legend, which, even, as it is, goes on to state that St. Ruadhan eventually ransomed his brother for thirty horses, which one might assume was the end of the lock-out, but by a much simpler cause. Tara, in the centre of Ireland, lay in the territory of the Southern O'Neills, who were at this time in a perpetual state of war with the Northern O'Neills. The famous battle of Cuildreimhne, for which St. Columcille is wrongly held responsible, was the eighth battle between these two clans in sixty years. It resulted in the Northern O'Neills wresting the sovereignty from their kinsmen as the fruit of their victory. The Northern O'Neills thereupon transferred the seat of Irish Government away from Tara to a place near Derry, in their own territory in the north, much as another conquering race transferred the seat of government from Dublin to London in after days. To hold two saints, one of them a famous advocate of peace, responsible for these ordinary tribal amenities is ridiculous. The stories that seek to fix them with liability are evident romances. "The battle of Cuildreimhne would have been fought if Columcille had never existed, and the

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desertion of Tara can be accounted for without praying in aid, the bells and curses of St. Ruadhan."

Another wild legend found embodied in our earlier Irish histories is that which states, on the faith of certain manuscripts, that the Irish Church began its career with three hundred and fifty bishops, *all saints*. In sober fact there were about fifty, one for each of the dioceses. Their jurisdiction was essentially territorial. And each diocese corresponded to the territory of a single tribe, thus Kilmacduagh corresponded to the territory of the Ui Fiachra Aidhne, Ross to the territory of the Corca-Laidhe, Ossory very nearly represents the tribe land of the Ui Osraighe, and Dromore the tribe land of the Ui Ecac—Iveagh. The dioceses are the oldest existing divisions of our country.

The next legend, with which it may be worth while to deal, is that which represents King Brian of the Tribute, the tribute which he exacted from the men of Leinster, as something in the nature of a national, or even a Christian, hero instead of the ambitious tribal chief—no better or worse than other chieftains—which he actually was. The fact that the battle of Clontarf happened to be fought on Good Friday has lent colour to the story. No doubt Brian's ultimate success, like that of other ambitious kings in Europe, would have benefitted his country by the unity it must have brought about. But the battle of Clontarf was not in any sense a national or religious conflict between the Irish and the foreigner, as it is commonly represented to be. The men of Ulster, Ulidia and North Connacht stood aloof from it. The men of Leinster and Ossory fought shoulder to shoulder with the Norsemen. Brian had only the Dal Cais, the men of South Munster and South Connacht, and possibly—though this is disputed—the men of Meath under Maelseachlainn. The Danes living in Ireland and Dublin, who took part in the battle, were very

largely Christian. The Northmen from over the sea were to some extent Christian, and certainly came to Clontarf for hire and plunder, and not to wreak vengeance or extirpate Christianity. Brian's own daughter was married to Sitric, the king of the Dublin Danes. It has even been asserted that Brian himself married Sitric's mother, Queen Gormlaith. But seeing that Queen Gormlaith had a husband and Brian a wife at the time, there are, to say the least, difficulties in the way of accepting this last story. But, be this as it may, the Danes had by that time become an integral part of the Irish people, and were more Gaelic than the Gaels themselves. The battle of Clontarf differed very little in its essence from the many inter-tribal contests in which ambitious kings and chiefs found themselves perpetually engaged in Ireland.

I come finally to the celebrated love-story of Dermot MacMurrough. Our own story of Sir Tristan and the lady of Chapelizod having been definitely appropriated by the Germans, it was necessary to find something else. The romantic elopement of Dearbhforgail (or Dervorgilla) seemed to be eminently suitable for the purpose. And as it coincided with the arrival on our shores of that highly sentimental people, the English, it has attained a considerable popularity. It has even been looked upon as an improving anecdote, owing to its political moral. Now, of the pair of alleged lovers in this case, it may be stated *in limine* that Dearbhforgail, the lady, was aged 44, and Dermot about 65, at the time of the supposed romance.

The Four Masters say: "Dearbhforgail, daughter of Murchadh Ua Maelseachlainn, wife of Tighearnan Ua Ruarc, was brought away by the King of Leinster, with her cattle and furniture, and he took them with her according to the advice of her brother Maelseachlainn."

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The entry in the continuator of Tighernach is simply: "The daughter of Murchadh came away by flight from Leinster."

In reality she was probably taken away for safe keeping and as a hostage, with the consent of her family, and restored to her husband when he made a submission to Turlough O'Connor. There was no romance in the matter whatever. She was, it may be added, a great benefactor to the Church, and died at Mellifont in the 85th year of her age. The popular fable is a cruel insult to the memory of a good woman. Father George O'Neill has also dealt with this matter.

Of the whole story we may say with the Greek poet:

οὐκ ἦν ἐτυμος ὁ λόγος.

DEMOCRACY OF DIALECT

It seems as if we are in for a period of anti-democratic reaction. It has come a little later in the twentieth century than it did in the nineteenth; that is all. In Rome it was always the Volscians who blighted the aspirations of the *plebs*. As far as politics are concerned, the democrat has little to hope for, except perhaps the complete equality of empire. In these circumstances I venture to suggest a new field for his labours, an intellectual field. The literary oppression of the lower classes is enormously greater than their political oppression has ever been, even under the worst governments. It is stronger, deeper, and better sustained than those tyrannies of birth, creed, colour, or race, against which humanity has at different times cried out. Indeed it is so strong that it can even do that which is the supreme achievement of tyranny, it can suppress the mention of itself.

The matter can be put in a single sentence. Modern civilization allows the poor man a vote; it refuses him a voice. His words, spoken and written, are treated as filth—sound or symbols in their wrong place—and every available means taken to suppress them. The dialect or slang of a very limited class, into which it is impossible to gain an entry without wealth, or (too often) *with* morals is arbitrarily fixed upon as a standard. And every man is invited to express his thoughts in this dialect or maintain a dead silence from the cradle to the grave. But in modern times an alleviation is attempted. The poor are educated up to a certain point. Great pains are taken to teach them the favoured dialect, and many

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men of humble condition even succeed in mastering it, in a sense. So Frenchmen, native Irishmen, and Germans—especially Germans—master English. But they don't produce English literature. You can't write really well in a foreign language. Even a great writer can't do it. Gibbon, Burns, and our own Owen Roe each attempted it, and each failed miserably. Think again of the incomparable energy and even the supreme ability that has for centuries been devoted to composition in the Latin and Greek languages, and the literary result—absolutely nothing. And yet the poor are permanently condemned to write in a foreign language the dialect before alluded to.

Let us take the case of Burns himself. Like Lord Bacon, he possessed two languages, in one of which, his own language, he could write, and in the other of which, he thought he could write. The latter was the respectable language. What a tremendous blessing for Burns that he was a Scot, and so might make bold to write in a separate dialect. Had he been born an Englishman of the lower classes, he might also have possessed two languages, literary English and his own. But he would have been afraid to write his own English; and would have stayed a minor poet all his life, or else remained wholly silent. Tasso and Dante would have had no better fate had they written in Latin instead of the unlearned Italian.

Now, my thesis is simply this: that (Bradley's *Arnold* notwithstanding) no one dialect is better or worse than any other, that each man should speak in the dialect that comes natural to him, and write as he speaks. The poor have powers of observation, and even of reflection much above those of the rich. They have a greater sense of life. They have a deeper religious sense, and there are to be found among them men with all those keen sensuous perceptions and imaginative strivings that make the

poet. And if they are Scots ploughmen, they sometimes prove this fact by expressing what they feel. But among most European peoples the literary tyranny is too strong for them. They are educated or intimidated. They remain mute and inglorious, simply because they are taught that, if they write at all, it is their duty to be Miltons.

The most surprising example of this principle at work is American literature. It has been cause for perpetual remark that for their size and population, the United States have contributed singularly little to the literature of the English language, which they speak. Various explanations have been offered, as that Americans are not educated or not interested in literature. Both statements are patently untrue. I suggest that the real explanation is that American writers, like Burns in his English writings, and Bacon in his Latin, are composing in a language that is not their own, and earning literary mediocrity for the reward. If they would throw the English language into Boston harbour and take courage to write in that vivid American, which is really their native tongue, they would find the same amazing results flowing from literary as from political freedom. As it is, the best and freshest things in American literature are those compositions in real American, which under the guise of dialogue or humour have found their way into the literature of the United States. Humour has always been the first defence against tyranny. Who would not prefer *David Harum* to the vapidities of Washington Irving? Some day American literature will take courage to be itself.

To compare a small people with a very great, much the same is true of the attempts of the native Irish (I am one of them) to write English. Mangan, the most successful, owes far more to his Gaelic originals than is usually recognized. Next comes Moore, a

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clever versifier, but scarcely a great poet. After him a few novelists and one poet who reach mediocrity, and a vast number of writers who do not even attain that standard. These men were all trying to write a foreign language. The results they achieved are ludicrously small in comparison with the splendid contribution made to the literature of the English language by the English colonists in Ireland from Swift down to our own time.

In these last examples there are of course national differences, but the principle is the same. The American and the Irish Gael are no further away from literary English than are the lower classes of the various European countries from their literary dialects. The suggestion to give voice to these lower classes, it need scarcely be said, lends itself readily to light humour. All movements of emancipation do. Voices for men is quite as funny as votes for women, and, Heaven knows, that kept the humorists going long enough. Some brilliant things, with the words "Not 'arf" coming in frequently, could be written about the new literary compositions of the poor. If professional humorists ever dip into so serious a magazine as *Studies* I recommend the suggestion to them.

My proposals, if they are understood at all, will be seen to be highly revolutionary. They strike at the oldest, deepest, and best-established tyranny, the most potent instrument of oppression in the world, literary or linguistic tyranny. It is proposed that as democracy allows the poor man to think for himself and to vote for himself, so he shall be listened to when he speaks for himself. I suppose most people have already decided that I am running my head against a stone wall, attacking institutions and conventions, of which the foundations are laid too deep for them to be easily shaken. It reads very well on paper, but in practice! Will they be surprised to hear that the thing has already been not merely

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attempted, but actually done, and that it has been a complete success. Where? In Korea, perhaps. No; not in Korea, in another small country—in the west. In fact, to give away the secret, in Ireland.

You have probably heard of a certain Dr. Kuno Meyer, who received the freedom of Dublin. Did you ever hear of a certain Father Peter O'Leary, who got it the same day? His achievement was that he did everything suggested in this article, and did it successfully. There was in Irish, as in other greater languages, a literary dialect. It had traces of Cicero about it. The greatest Irish writers had written in it. After a sharp combat he overthrew it, and insisted on writing in the common speech of the common people. The result has been a renaissance in modern Gaelic literature, comparable to the earlier renaissance that arose in Gaelic poetry, from the overthrow of the bardic schools. Gaelic is a small and weak language, spoken by comparatively few. Yet, even in Gaelic, a return to truth has wrought marvellous results. The battle is over, and the thing is admitted nowadays. What must be the result of such a return to truth in any of the greater languages? If France would dare to be revolutionary and throw aside that literary tradition, in which nothing is variable, except moral standards. If Germans would write with the simplicity of conversation. If Italy would use all her dialects.

The world has surely grown tired in its literature. Was there ever such barrenness as in the recent war? It was a moment of supreme emotion. The countries of Shakespeare, of Tolstoi, and of Voltaire were in labour. "Tipperary" is brought in in a warming-pan. A period of reconstruction is surely at hand. The time has come for a rebirth of literature. It can be brought about in each country by casting aside literary cliques and conventions, and returning to the speech of the people.

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It cannot be doubted that it is by the spiritual possession of her intellect, rather than by any more material estate, that Ireland must support her claim for renown before the court of humanity ; and when she would put forward her intellect it must be above all on that intellect as crystallized in literature, as preserved eternally in the great works of her greatest writers that she must base her demand. Of Irish literature, however, there are two great divisions : that which is written in the soft and beautiful tongue of old, and that conveyed in the language most of us speak to-day, a language less melodious, but one in which the most sublime masterpieces of human eloquence have been pronounced by our fellow-countrymen. Of one only of these divisions I intend to treat in this paper. Our early literature is still on the way ; it has not as yet, like the literature of Greece or Germany, attained that rank of world possession, which we all hope to see it one day reach. And it will be my task in this paper rather to assert our claim to those dominions, which we already possess of right, than to join in seeking any new addition to them, however just be the annexation.

The invention of an easy English style is contemporary with the entry into literature of Steele and Swift, the first great Irish writers. As St. Augustine was still the African, though writing in

¹ A paper read at University College, Stephen's Green, in 1899.

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Latin, so the great Irish prose-writers of the last two centuries, the true inheritors of the ancient Gaelic genius, when expressing their thoughts, found in the English language not a yoke but an instrument. Too much of the time and resource of our critics is spent in seeking for Irish poetry in the English language, a quest of which the outcome is seldom satisfactory. For this eagerness to exalt the most trifling product of our verse-makers over all our more solid begettings arises from a strange misapprehension. It is commonly taken for granted that our nation is still prolific in poets. The high standard of early Irish poetry is universally known. That we are an intellectual and highly-sensitive race, equally so. It is forthwith concluded that an abundance of high-class poetry is being or has lately been produced in our midst, and explorers are straightway deputed to go in search of it.

Proceeding, however, upon a more scientific basis, if we look to actual facts and results, we must necessarily arrive at a far different finding. It will appear that so far from Ireland being in later times a nursery for bards and sending out poetic missionaries to the rest of Europe, our poetry has during the last two centuries attained only a very moderate degree of excellence, and has, in fact, lagged very far behind our prose. Admittedly the best Irish poet is either Moore or Mangan. Their respective admirers are, indeed, still disputing as to which of them is no poet. Yet we need not hold so low an opinion about either as the followers of his rival do. We need not fail to see poetry in the "Meeting of the Waters," or meaning in "Dark Rosaleen," but surely we cannot admit either writer amongst the poets of the first rank, or agree that he has attained the same degree of perfection in his own art that Swift or Bourke did in theirs. Both poets wrote pretty verses, but few would compare them to Keats

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or Shelly. What, I wonder, would be their position relative to Shakespeare or Dante, Pindar or Sophocles. Such a comparison may doubtless seem unfair. But we must remember that from a like one, in their own class, neither Bourke nor Swift need shrink. It is a moot point whether the Drapier's Letters or the Philippics of Demosthenes be the more splendid monument of persuasive oratory; whether, in grandeur of eloquence, the Philippics of Cicero are superior to the Revolution Philippics of Bourke: whether, last of all, in Juvenal, Dryden, Voltaire—whether in all the satire that has struck terror into erring mankind in recorded time there be found any equal to the fiery lava-stream of Swift.

These great masters of prose I would put forward as the true representatives of our genius in so far as it has taken form in English.¹ To Gaelic our best verse belongs; to English our prose. It is a well-observed phenomenon of all literatures that a period of great poetry is succeeded by a cycle of prose-writers. Our era of poetry occurred while we still spoke our native language. That era is now unhappily almost past. The eighteenth century saw the coming of our age of prose, and, owing to the circumstances of the time, the expression of our thoughts and feelings under this form clothed itself in the English tongue. To search in our English literature of the last two centuries for any analogue to the poetic harvest of earlier ages is to act upon a mistaken principle. The dainty English versifiers of recent times are no true counterpart to the mighty Gaelic creators of the past. We should rather look

¹ Twenty years after, I see this essay full of the cock-sureness of a young fellow in his twentieth year, insensible to the poetic revival around him, clinging to received opinions with the strange loyalty of youth, failing to notice that few or none of the writers mentioned were of the native population. The writer was probably not then aware that the best Gaelic poetry belongs to the eighteenth century.—A.E.C.

for a development, and that development we should seek to find embodied in a period of excellence in the more sober art; and we do find it represented in the works of our great eighteenth-century writers. As Plato and the orators were a natural development of Aristophanes and the tragedians; as Shakespeare and his compeers found their successors in Addison, Richardson, and the prose-verse of Pope, so Swift and Goldsmith, Steele and Berkeley, Sheridan and Bourke are the lineal descendants of our lyrists and our epicists.

To offer any proof of the greatness of such writers would be a useless task. All mankind has already admitted it. The attacks we have to parry, in asserting our claim to them, are of a different kind. The energies of successive generations of English *littérateurs* have been devoted to proving they were not our countrymen. As the success of a descendant ennobles Chinese ancestors, so the performance of any great achievement by an Irishman results in the transplanting of his family-tree to the richer soil. Famous Irishmen become English after death. The finding of a grandfather in Lincoln follows close on the discovery of a great-aunt in Sussex, and we are forthwith informed that our mighty humorist was mistaken as to his nationality, and his humour really an alien product. The evidence of character is then brought forward to back that of genealogy. It is pointed out that Swift and Berkeley were not Irishmen, because they were not formed on the model of Goldsmith, and sometimes, with nicer refinement, that Goldsmith was not one either because he was not the counterpart of Bourke. The method by which a standard of Irish character has been arrived at in our neighbour country is indeed not a little peculiar. No one ever thinks of criticising John Bright or Sir Robert Peel upon the basis of their powers of beef-consumption, or their resemblance to

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a Punch caricature of John Bull. But a corresponding method is commonly applied to determine the nationality of distinguished Irishmen. Irish characters are subjected, not to analysis, but to a strange sort of synthesis. A composite nature is made up out of the most *outré* characteristics of Bourke, Swift, Goldsmith, and Sheridan; an imaginary being as witty as Swift, as rhetorical as Bourke, as improvident as Goldsmith, as intemperate as Steele or Sheridan is conceived and dubbed the typical Irishman. It is then discovered that each of these writers lacked something of this strange ideal; that the writings of the Drapier and the Citizen of the World are simple in style, that Bourke was not witty, that Swift used to walk to bed unassisted, and actually had, when he died, a balance at his bankers. They are all straightway set down as un-Irish, and sentenced to eternal transportation across the Channel.

This strange method of criticism, a method we ourselves, unhappily, are only too ready to submit to and adopt, arises from the same fallacy which we have had to consider before, that of supposing all things Irish to be uniform and conformable to some one pattern. Characters, however, are quite as various in our island as in the rest of the world. There are economical Irishmen as there are lavish ones. Bourke, the only eighteenth-century writer with a pure Irish pedigree, spent his leisure hours in vain but desperate attempts to make a joke. This, however, would not justify us joining a distinguished lady writer in her flight to the conclusion that the native Irish are not a witty people, and what is known as Irish humour is really a Saxon quality. We must be prepared to meet with many and various Irish natures, and must not attribute every deviation from the conventional type to English ancestry. This plea of English pedigree is indeed the customary

excuse for robbing us of our best authors. Walt Whitman is never claimed as an English writer. Mark Twain preserves his nationality after death. But hereditary ownership is alleged in all Irishmen whose families may have been originally derived from England. However sharp the line which divides their characters, different though they be amongst themselves, from those formed in the other island, no explanation is ever sought in the all-important factors of national absorption, and, above all, education. The theory that man is wholly the product of his time and circumstance may not be altogether true. Yet certainly the conditions of bringing up and early surroundings must have no small share in the formation of character and mental development. To call Laurence Sterne an Irishman is the mere pedantry of birth registration. But if it was found that in Norman times such families as the Fitzgeralds became more Irish than the Irish themselves, why should not a similar phenomenon explain the characters of our Goldsmiths and our Sheridans? Nay, if a foreign pedigree cannot rob Athens of her Pericles, or France of her Napoleon, why should our great men alone be the creatures of genealogy?

I have in this paper joined in the endeavour to save for our literature those pages which the criticism of a neighbouring country, often assisted by our own partisan complacency, has attempted to filch from it. What, it may be asked, do these pages contain? I do not hesitate about an answer. Of what is good in English prose literature they comprise that which is best. At a period when English prose had reached its highest level—when it had freed itself from the intricacies and Latinisms of the seventeenth century, and had not as yet fallen into that sensationalism and straining after effect which mar it at present—every great prose writer, save Addison alone, was Irish. Even he cannot be wholly granted

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to England until we ascertain how much more of what is conventionally attributed to Addison, must be added to the newly-discovered realms of our countryman, Dick Steele. Compared with our great writers, how little value can be accorded to the splendid but ephemeral novels of that period, the forgotten and unreadable works of Smollet, or the vast and now well-nigh untrodden wildernesses of Richardson. Nay, from a literary point of view, the hybrid prose of Gibbon can entitle him only to a far lower eminence.

In the works of the eighteenth century writers five great strains appear. Whether in the writings of Berkeley, the Plato of the English language, the deepest thought is to be found, is a subject for the unparliamentary discussions of philosophers. But that of all thinkers he enshrined his thought product in the purest prose, that his instrument of expression is attuned to the most delicate harmony, is conceded even by his most bitter opponents. To the music of Berkeley's style, the ease of Steele's tea-table essays, and the beautiful simplicity of Goldsmith, a simplicity that yet found, perhaps, its sweetest expression in the *Vicar of Wakefield*, form a fitting counterpart. In his embodiment of comedy, the third great strain, Goldsmith is also pre-eminent. *She Stoops to Conquer* needs no exposition. The theatre or the library has made it familiar to all of us. Criticism could only repeat those expressions of admiration that all mankind has already bestowed on it. Poor Oliver's comedy seems destined to outlast all other plays, except, indeed, the masterpieces of his countryman, Sheridan. For the latter's wit appears fated to outlive even the fame of his oratory. The woes of the dowagers of Oude drew tears from a crowded House of Commons, the humours of Charles Surface and Mrs. Malaprop seem likely to divert humanity for ever. Yet of the mighty strain of oratory, Sheridan

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was one of the most splendid exponents. With Bourke and Grattan he made up that triad of inspired speakers who have made eloquence peculiarly our own. To his fame, Byron, twenty years later, bore witness. As to his companions, it is no exaggeration to say that in the Revolution drama, Bourke, towering above Mirabeau, held amongst the orators a position no less exalted than that of Bonaparte among the men of action; whilst as to Grattan, though true oratory is now but little in vogue, it is safe to forecast that with a juster standard of taste and a more generous appreciation of the power and harmony of voice, he will once again be regarded as a mighty master by all who seek to be enthralled or to enthrall the minds of men.

Whether Swift, for it is with this master of satire the fifth great strain I would conclude, was justified in abandoning his party and some of his principles in order to maintain others which he considered of paramount importance, is a problem of political ethics of which I cannot hope to offer any solution in this paper.

The specific gravity of Wood's halfpence is now a matter of little concern. But the question of the nationality of the greatest satirist the world has ever seen cannot but be of supreme interest. We must of necessity feel a certain pride and affection, mingled though they be with awe, when we look on that vast nature-fighting spirit that once pulsated in our midst. Yet, from all claim to the Dean of St. Patrick's Thackeray would debar us. Always an enemy to an Irishman, he was only too glad to sever Swift from his compatriots, that he might vivisection him at greater leisure before his spinster-audiences in England. In his superficial essay he pressed home a certain harshness that we find mingled with the Dean's character, to prove it was un-Irish. It is this view, unhappily, that has gained currency in our country

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in later times. Cheap editions of Thackeray and of Macaulay—the latter of whom having no space for Swift in his corridor of heroes was obliged, according to the canons of his art, to place him in his gallery of villains—have begotten ideas directly at variance with tradition. People whose grandfathers still tell pleasant tales of Swift, and who, had they been his contemporaries, would have thought it an honour to join his bodyguard, and probably have doubted whether Mr. Wood or Chief Justice Whitshed more nearly resembled anti-Christ, now see in the great Dean only a churlish and un-Irish boor.

Yet this was not the man that Vanessa longed for, that Stella loved. Though he was harsh as the bard of old, none the less Swift's nature was Irish. But its nationality was obscured by the demoniac influences that beset his existence; it was an Irish nature, but an Irish nature permeated with vitriol. In his soul the beautiful and the repulsive were strangely mingled. Charitable beyond measure, loving his friends and loved by them, using his genius ever for the good of his fellows, the flowers that he culled withered beneath his touch. The awful malady of hating for its imperfections that which he loved, tainted all. His benevolence for his fellow-man was unparalleled, yet his fellow-men form without distinction the subject of his direst satire. The betterment of his native country appears to have been the great object of his existence, but towards that country he seems to have professed throughout his life only feelings of horror and indignation. Nor can we doubt that it was hatred of himself and hatred of common humanity that prevented that union with Stella, which might have done so much to bring back his desolate spirit from the dry places into which it had wandered.

Swift's was a life of good deeds and ghoul-faced

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sorrows. He craved not our pity, yet he deserved it. Still, though we pity, we cannot but exult; for we may not forget that, dreadful as were the conditions under which his genius worked, that reasoning that could scatter armies, that plain-spoken rhetoric that could stir nations to their depths, that wit that could lash humanity, are one and all but portions of the heritage of our national mind. It is to the product of that mind that I have tried to afford definition, and, in some way, criticism, in this paper. Our national soul has had two great embodiments. First, the literature of the Gaelic language, in which poetry flourished, with which it expired, and with whose revival I, for one, hope it may again take life; secondly, the splendid works of the eighteenth century, a true embodiment of our national genius, that, taking fresh life under new forms, as it had once been pre-eminent in poetry, so now established an empire over prose. Overshadowing the reflected efforts of contemporary poets, Irish writers, though of English race, the famous authors inspired by it, wits, orators, essayists, philosophers, took captive the conquering English tongue, and moulded in it that vast and imperishable monument that will preserve the memory of our race, when, to the dead century, be added yet another, and yet to that another and another.

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Like ping-pong and roller-skating, the art and pastime of voting is for the moment somewhat out of vogue. At least it is so in Europe. Nevertheless, this has not prevented the inauguration of at least one suffrage movement. I take courage to suggest another. After all, at the present time one can be a propagandist with less danger to life and limb than usual, since no one really cares what your views are, on any subject save the one. The absence of free institutions is moreover, in some respects, rather a help to the spread of novel opinions, an absolute government having, as has often been remarked, by no means the same facilities for hunting down and slaying new ideas that a well-established democracy possesses. The Renaissance and the French Revolution were each of them the product of unfree institutions. Women's claim to the suffrage and the further claim I now venture to put forward are but carrying the second of these movements to its logical conclusion.

It is a trite saying that the three stages of any reform movement are ridicule, indignation, and acquiescence. Self-government is (outside Ulster) in the third stage; women's suffrage was recently in the second; we can all remember when it was in the first. The proposals here put forward have yet to reach even the first stage of attentive ridicule. But let me say that, though it may perhaps have the good fortune to excite wide-spread derision, this article is not intended to be humorous. It is not, for instance, written as a satire upon the movement for women's

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suffrage, as might readily be suspected. On the contrary, the suggestions it contains are put forward as a serious remedy for a great body of admitted social evil.

Modern social enquiry seems to be steadily reaching the conclusion that the human race is in large part ruined in its 'teens. Physically, no doubt, civilized humanity is corrupted at a still earlier age by under-feeding, bad housing, and want of medical attendance; and the community realizing this has entered on a policy (limited indeed) of housing the poor, free meals, and medical inspection for school children. (By the way, speaking of free meals, I wish some economist with classical qualifications would make an independent investigation into the subject of *panem et circenses*, and ascertain whether this state policy of a great empire was really the evil thing that middle-class authorities have so often represented it to be.) The physical ruin of the poor comes early; their moral and intellectual degeneration comes in the second decade of life. I need not enlarge on such topics as child-labour, the sudden stoppage of education, the want of technical training and "blind-alley occupations," nor yet on these worse snares and evils which a modern city provides in unchecked profusion for the young. The former class of evils has been pointed out by all recent social investigators. It was the subject of a very able lecture by Professor Corcoran some time ago in which he advocated certain palliatives, such as extension classes. The latter kind of evils fall under that axiom of modern statecraft, that "the Devil has his rights and they are not lightly to be interfered with." Humanity between the ages of twelve and twenty is surely the site of his most extensive possessions.

The evils themselves are admitted. How are they to be dealt with? The remedy for social evils is commonly not sociological. Of course it is simple

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enough to combat evil; you have only to do good. But doing good, *in a public way*, is about the hardest thing in the world. It is commonly the most unpopular. For one thing, you trench on the vested rights alluded to in the last paragraph. One must look to politics for the answer to the problems of sociology. The evils of the Irish land system for instance were known for more than a century. Royal Commissions had discovered them. Philanthropists had wept over them. Economists had set them forth in treatises. It required Michael Davitt and the Land League to put an end to them. The social sciences seldom go beyond a treatment of symptoms. You must employ the surgery of the politician to effect a radical cure.

There is one other proposition which has come to be looked upon as an axiom of democracy, that nobody can look after a man's interest as well as the man himself. Of course there are always other people ready to take charge of them. Before 1793, while Catholics still lacked the franchise, there were not a few benevolent Protestants ready to promote and foster their interests in every way, to be more Catholic than the Catholics themselves. Wolfe Tone for one was wholly disinterested. Still the Catholics preferred to do the voting themselves; they felt they could safeguard Catholic interests better than even their most eager well-wishers. And this has been the view of all disfranchised classes, a view commonly borne out in the result. It is of course one of the strongest grounds upon which women's claim to the suffrage was usually based.

Now, as there were Protestants who looked after Catholic interests before 1793, as there are Members of Parliament at present who look after the interests of women, so there are by no means wanting philanthropists who take an interest in the welfare of the young, men who devote themselves to such questions

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as "blind-alley occupations" or "child-labour," and honestly seek a remedy for them. There are friends of youth, just as there are friends of Ireland, and friends of labour. But my point is that the interest of such persons in these questions and their influence for good in solving them is much less than the interest and influence of the classes affected would be if they were themselves allowed a voice in the matter. Philanthropy is a weak battle-cry as compared with self-interest. And though any one individual may be neglectful of his own interests, a class hardly ever is. Give boys the vote, and they will of a surety use it, like other classes, to promote the interests of their kind, to solve the problems of boyhood, to punish the outrages that are perpetrated on their age.

The wrongs inflicted by adults upon voteless adolescents are very considerable, and yet like most such things readily laughed away. Laughter is the best defence for the indefensible. Some of them, such as the problems of boy-labour, have already been alluded to. The system which to suit the convenience of their elders turns the city street into an occasion of sin, is an evil scarcely less crying, though perhaps less perceived. But even in small matters it is remarkable how the adult constantly sacrifices the interest of the young to his own most trifling convenience. The English monetary system and system of spelling are two of the most glaring examples. Here the interest of the young is in direct conflict with the inertia of the adult, and the adult does not hesitate to inflict years of useless drudgery upon the school-boy or school-girl in order to avoid the three or four weeks of discomfort that would be caused by the change to a more rational system. Here again laughter is the defence. American adults laughed as loudly at Roosevelt's spelling changes as English adults would laugh at a

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proposal to introduce dollars and cents as a basis of computation.

The young, too, have certain of the other marks of a servile class. With procurers and garroters they remain the only sections of the community still liable to torture—by stripes. Laughter again tends to be the defence. And the jokes about flogging boys bear a close family resemblance to the jokes about flogging adult slaves, with which readers of Tereñce and Plautus are familiar. It is only in comparatively recent times that the same treatment has come to be looked upon as no longer suitable for women. Some such phrase as "it is good for them," or perhaps even "they like it," is in such matters usually thought a sufficient justification. That for which a class beyond all else needs the vote, is to protect itself from degradation.

Of course it will be said that if the young had the vote, they would not know how to use it, that school-boys are not the persons most fit to decide questions of foreign policy, for instance. Are agricultural labourers? Youths under twenty-one have those qualities which are perhaps most lacking in modern statecraft, honesty and enthusiasm. They would form an uncorrupt element in every electorate. Honesty—public honesty—is the quality of the 'teens and the early twenties. It is all but gone by the thirties, surviving later perhaps in a few chosen individuals, in men like Davitt, for instance, who have had their principles preserved in the antiseptic atmosphere of a British gaol.

Nor have boys shown themselves in any way lacking in those other qualities that make the good citizen. In Ireland at least, taking them one with another, they certainly work harder than adults, and their work is more disinterested. They have a far keener desire for intellectual improvement, and are more interested in serious questions. They read serious

books for pleasure. Not one adult in a hundred does. Until contaminated by some of the sources of corruption already alluded to they are more religious and much less vicious than adults. In our time, in such bodies as the boy-scouts, they have shown a remarkable capacity for patriotism and organization. Irish boy-scouts have at least one very striking achievement to their credit in quite recent times. The "military" argument commonly urged against the female vote cannot be used in this case. Whilst on the other hand a well-known argument for women's suffrage, that the highest type of woman is immeasurably superior to the lowest type of male voter, applies with even increased force in the case of boys. A well-educated and clever boy has faculties immensely superior to those of the lowest type of adult voter. Yet even were this not the case, the objection would be irrelevant. It is not because of his capabilities as a governor, but because of his rights as one of the governed, that modern democracy gives an individual the vote.

Finally, it may be asked, what is the concrete proposition? Are voters in arms to be carried to the poll by their nurses, for instance? This is the *reductio ad absurdum* of the proposal. The propositions of practical politics always admit of a *reductio ad absurdum*; it in no way impairs their validity. There is a limit. But one can be damned at seven. I propose to give the vote at twelve, or at all events, at fourteen, when the individual incurs full criminal responsibility, and a large degree of civil responsibility for his acts. In the Roman empire the privilege of citizenship was acquired about this age. In other words, the interests of the school population, so much talked about, so little really attended to, would receive a real representation in the commonwealth. Educational questions would at last be looked at from the point of view of those who are to be educated,

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instead of from every other point of view under heaven. Nor would this point of view resolve itself into a mere demand for idleness, as the cynic may suggest. Boys as a class are no more fools than anyone else, in fact rather less so. It might, however, easily resolve itself into a demand that learning should be associated with humanity.

It remains to deal with a few rather obvious objections. "They have shown no desire for the vote, they don't want it." As this objection is a standard one against all franchise and emancipation movements whatever, I need only refer the objector to the well-known answers, which are now almost as definitely in stereotype as the objection. "They would not use it if they got it," "it would bring ruin and ridicule on the commonwealth." "It is too ridiculous to be seriously discussed." To these the same remark applies. Finally, the subtle humorist, if he be of a logical turn of mind, can urge something really original. "Why stop short in your democracy? Why not give votes to the other excluded classes, criminals and lunatics?" Well, as for lunatics, any politician must admit, nay he has perpetually stated, that they are fully represented—on the other side. Whilst as for criminals, many of them in fact have the vote; but in any event criminals belong commonly not so much to the classes that vote, as to the class that is voted for. To take the most famous instance, the hero of Victor Hugo's *Story of a Crime* received the almost unanimous suffrages of a people.

I cannot, of course, hope for an immediate acceptance of these proposals. I shall be satisfied if I awake some first faint stirring in the political conscience of the community, even though that stirring should have its beginning in the risible faculty.

THE PSEUDO-SCIENCE OF CLASSICS

The subject of Classics is now, roughly speaking, in the same position as Religion was in the reigns of Louis XV and Louis XVI. It is still respectable; it has its paid professors, who are people of consequence, if not of influence; a limited amount of it (every day becoming less) is still supported by a severe legal compulsion; but it is thoroughly hated by everybody; no one has the courage to say a good word for it in private.

There was a time when public men embellished their speeches—in those days people used to read them—with quotations instead of epigrams. Virgil and Cicero enjoyed almost the respect now given to the latest Russian novelist. And copies of Horace were then as common as those of Tagore or Baudelaire in our time. Nowadays, in Ireland at any rate, we should almost prefer a biblical to a classical quotation; and that is saying a great deal. In England the feeling about the classics seems to be very much the same. The aristocracy who, from reasons of policy (is not classics still the mark of a gentleman and even a New Zealand professor of Greek still respectable?) have hitherto given classics a formal support, must one of these days proclaim their adhesion to the general dislike. At best, in the United States of America, that home of Democracy and other lost causes, ever respectful of tradition, something of the old honour may continue, and the hungry Greekling may find refuge in Harvard

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or Yale or Washington, much as he did in Ireland in the dark ages.

I have compared the contempt for classics to the contempt for religion in the eighteenth century. It is interesting to remark that that contempt proved wholly mistaken. No men ever had had their prognostications more falsified in the result than the *savants* who in the latter half of the eighteenth century predicted the speedy disappearance of religion. The exact contrary occurred; as I write men are marching to their death under religious banners in every country in Europe. A later age discovered that it was the *abbé* who was contemptible, not the Church; and it was only because men had ceased to *live* their religion, that religion seemed a dead thing. And if one may compare a purely secular study one might say that the study of classics in our time is in the same case. It has been stifled by a false science. But it must one day revive; for the thing itself is deep down in the heart of man.

I have no statistics by me. I daresay there are more editions and more accurate editions of the classics produced in our time than in any previous period. (There were probably more churches and much better ones in France in the time of Louis XV than in the time of St. Louis.) But the thing itself is slipping from our grasp. Classical study has all but ceased to be an integral part of modern life. Part of this is no doubt the fault of our age. A generation that can scarce bear the intellectual strain of reading a halfpenny newspaper and prefers to acquire knowledge of current events from the "movies," naturally sits down with no small reluctance to unravel a speech of Thucydides or a chorus of Æschylus—*μέγα βιβλίον μέγα κακόν*, said the men of Alexandria. In our time we are well on the way to drop the first word of the quotation and affirm

quite simply (or at least we should make the affirmation, if a knowledge of Greek still persisted), *βιβλίον μέγα κακόν*. When men are in this frame of mind the Latin and Greek classics have but a poor chance. Yet, granted that a gradual weakening of intellectual fibre, a steady growth of mental lassitude has been a marked feature of the last thirty years, this cannot of itself account for the deep unpopularity of classical study or, rather, classical knowledge. Nor is the increased study of German or the increased respect for French literature, nor even the study of translations of other modern literatures the real explanation. The study of classics could not have lost its hold, as it has done, classical knowledge could not have fallen into so deep a contempt if none but external causes were at work. It has, in large part, been destroyed from within. The classical professor has ruined the classics.

It is a fairly well-observed phenomenon that, if any system or organization finds itself in a stress of competition with an opposition system, it tends to abandon its characteristic qualities, and attempt to assimilate these of its victorious enemy, often with the most incongruous and disastrous results. This is what has happened to classics. For centuries the classical authors had held the leading place in that body of thought, supremely true in my view, which Pope summed up in the formula, "the proper study of mankind is man." The tale of Dido's love, the subtle analysis of her psychology, or (again) such a passage as the following :

ἐν ᾧ τλάμων ὄδ', οὐκ ἐγὼ μόνος,
 πάντοθεν βόρειος ὥς τις
 ἀκτὰ κυματοπλήξ χειμερία κλονείται,
 ὥς καὶ τόνδε κατ' ἄκρας
 δεινὰ κυματοαγεῖς
 ἄται κλονέουσιν αἰεὶ ξυνοῦσαι,

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αἱ μὲν ἀπ' ἀελίου δυσμᾶν,
αἱ δ' ἀνατέλλοντος,
αἱ δ' ἀνὰ μέσσαν ἀκτῖν',
αἱ δ' ἐν νυχθὶ ἀπὸ Περσῶν

were rightly looked upon as supreme, as the noblest efforts to interpret man to man.

But a great change came over thought in the last century. I refer not so much to that poetic revolution which, under pantheistic influence, came to look upon the scenery in life's drama as more important than the actors, which would, in the passage just quoted, have more feeling for the sorrows of the beach than of Œdipus. This was, of course, a reaction against classic ideas, in part no doubt a needed reaction. It was, we must remember, in some degree inspired by Gaelic literature. But it is not this that has led to the ruin of classical study.

Another movement of a very different kind arose about the same time as the Romantic movement. In one sense it was the very opposite of the Romantic. The great development of scientific research and adventure led to the most amazing results in the last century. The interest in scientific pursuits naturally became wide-spread and intense. Science, on its two sides of exuberant imagination and painstaking accumulation of exact knowledge, obtained extraordinary respect and universal popularity, even with those who had neither imagination nor capacity for ascertaining fact. On both sides it was inhuman, even anti-human, and in so far it was profoundly anti-classical.

Nineteenth century human beings were assailed not by imaginary *ἄται*, but by still more imaginary ether-waves. Both afforded an adequate explanation of observed phenomena. The latter, however, differed from the former in being capable of exact measurement; they were equally unreal. They were ever so

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much less human. And this cult of the inhuman came to pervade the whole life of the century, its morality, its economy, even its politics. People wanted to measure everything, even the incommensurable, to weigh the imponderable. It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that in the nineteenth century mathematics became the enemy of life; and it was in large part a mathematics of imaginary quantities, "the economic man" and the rest. All this was, of course, a deadly assault upon the position of classics and its allies. For they dealt with that by no means imaginary quantity, the human being, with his joys and his sorrows, his individual soul. You could not fit him into an equation or test him effectively by an experiment. Nineteenth century science had little in common with those things for which the classics stood. The jar was inevitable.

But how did the classicists meet the attack? They were guilty of an amazing folly. They abandoned the strongest position in the world, the heart of man. They set out to become scientists themselves. Never was there a sorrier spectacle. Classical learning had certain essential facts, of grammar, of textual variation, of social conditions associated with it. And men had at all times been employed to serve up texts, as men (or women) are employed to cook dinners. Bentley, for instance, had gained distinction in this art a century earlier, though his contemporaries, who had an unquestioning respect for the classics, rightly thought more of Addison, the poet. For the future this secondary aspect of classical learning was to be developed almost to the exclusion of everything else. Men were encouraged to devote themselves to the cooking rather than the eating. The various subsidiary elements in classical learning were worked up into a science; the good classical student was encouraged to divide his time between observing subjunctives and imagining emendations. Even men

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with fine qualities of taste, discrimination and human feeling like Jebb and Tyrrell had to bend to the yoke of pseudo-science, though as scientists they were as much out of place as Lucretius himself. The inevitable result followed; anyone can see it with his own eyes. Each day and each week the hatred of classics, apostate classics, classics false to its own first principle, the pseudo-science of classics, grew more intense, more wide-spread. It extended to every class; the classical student himself came to hate his gain-study; till to-day the great bulk of men view classics, classical authors, classical teachers and classical quotations with almost a passionate dislike. The old respect has wholly disappeared. The anti-clericalism of a French Freemason is scarcely as bitter as the anti-classicism of the average citizen. And yet classical scholars do not realize that all this is their own handiwork. They have ruined their study because they have betrayed it.

In very recent times an effort is being made to popularize classical studies, by calling in the aid of classical archæology, a useful and valuable science in itself, and especially useful in illustrating many points of classical learning. But this is to give water to the dropsical. What is needed for classics is not a new addition of science, the very evil from which it is suffering and almost expiring, but rather that it should shake itself free from science once for all and resume its place as a study and criticism of life. If the classical authors are ever to live again, in public esteem, it must be by restoring them to their position as living literature, and no longer leaving them as corpses on the dissecting-table of the learned. Dead immortal Cæsar has become a "subject."

THE SNOBBERY OF QUINTUS HORATIUS FLACCUS

A snob, says William Makepeace Thackeray, "is one who meanly admires mean things."¹ He should have known, for it is admitted that William Makepeace Thackeray was a snob himself. It is proposed to show that Quintus Horatius Flaccus, better known as Horace, belonged to the same numerous and respectable class of the community. No doubt he had not always been so. There was once a nobler Horace who has not come down to us, who might perhaps have enjoyed a less popularity if he had. Young Quintus had of course been brought up upon the most approved principles of snobbery by his really excellent father, who had been a slave. Excellent fathers have that way. He had been thoroughly instructed in platitudinous perfections much after the manner of Polonius' advice to his son. His father, admirable man, bade him emulate the virtues of a Special Juror. But to complete his son's education he was obliged to send him to the University or its then equivalent, Athens. Universities are strange places; they often make you pay dearly for the education and refinement they impart, by teaching you ideals, very dangerous things. And Quintus Horatius Flaccus, the clever son of the ex-slave, imbibed ideals.

Brutus was then making the last stand for human liberty, or at least constitutional government, that was to be made for many centuries. The republican

¹ *Book of Snobs*, cap. 2, p. 9.

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effort was to fail and the dull pall of the Roman Empire was to sink upon humanity, till at last the Christian religion should bring back colour to life. In this last glorious stand of Brutus and the narrow but splendid patriots of the time the young student took his part. This can scarcely have been what his careful father had looked for from all his training. Education has strange results. It may have been some compensation that young Quintus—the freed-man's son—was sometimes to be found leading a Roman legion. The young man himself was tremendously proud of it. Early education also counts for something. I am sure young Horace dealt with the very best military tailors of the period. But unfortunately the great adventure failed. Brutus was beaten. And few positions are less enviable than that of the officer of a defeated army.

Quintus Horatius Flaccus, late a commissioned officer of the Roman Army, now no one at all, was in sorry case. He went in for a position in the lower ranks of the Civil Service, and was glad to get it at that. The common idea is that Horace was rescued from this pass by the literary taste of the new Augustan age. This, I venture to suggest, is a mistake. Maecenas' set was probably about as literary as that of a modern prime minister. A real poet, such as Catullus, was wholly alien to them. Horace has only vile abuse for him.¹ One might conjecture that the descendant of the rather mythical Cilnii, who were "*regibus*" a very long time ago, was out of touch with the best Roman culture. Be that as it may, the extremely rowdy and ill-mannered set whom the tyrant's minister had gathered round him—*ista parisitica domus*—required something to

¹ quos neque pulcher

Hermogenes umquam legit neque simius iste.

Nil præter Calvum et doctus cantare Catullum.

Horace, *Satires*, Bk. I. x, 19.

fill up their intervals of sobriety, at least when it was too dark to play the ball game, something that should occupy the mind without straining it—just like a modern revue or daily paper. Horace's *sermones* and Virgil's early poems exactly met this need. Vulgar without being witty, you could enjoy them between drinks; and Maecenas, himself a drunken and effeminate fop,¹ who was a patron of the arts much after the manner of Lord Steyne, gave these two writers a place among his blackguards, buffoons and sycophants. To be more precise, one of them introduced the other. No doubt they belonged to the opposite political party. Both had suffered for their opinions. But who would nowadays trouble about the politics of the author of a musical comedy, and Horace at any rate was ready to submit to the indignity of representing himself as having been a coward during his military career,² though he had probably been a capable officer. If you think Juvenal,³ Suetonius,⁴ or other writers are unfair to the Maecenas set, read the "Supper of Nasidienus," as written by Horace.⁵ As a record of unmitigated blackguardism and vulgarity, there are few things to equal it in literature. Intended to be an attack on Maecenas' host, Nasidienus, though it is put in another's mouth, it lives as a terrible though unconscious satire on Maecenas, on the man who wrote it, and on the racketty crew whose taste it was written to suit. Horace's other writings of the period are quite of a piece with this—the buffooneries of the Brindisi journey, his rudeness on the Sacred Way, his gross cruelty towards Catullus, and in fact everyone who was not of the Maecenas set.

¹ See the references collected in Mayor's well-known note on Juvenal, I, 66.

² " . . . *relicta non bene parmula*."—Horace, *Odes*, II, 7, 10.

³ See *Satires*, I, 66; XII, 37.

⁴ See Mayor's note above referred to.

⁵ Horace, *Satires*, Bk. II, 8.

It is scarcely to be set down as blame to Horace that he was proud of his intimacy or even of his influence with Augustus' minister. Horace was, of course, careful to assert that he did not use this influence,¹ that he took no interest in practical matters, and was in fact wholly immersed in the delights of friendship from man to man. But he was not sorry to have it thought that a word from him (Horace) would set matters right.² Horace indeed so often proclaims the disinterested nature of his relations with his patron that one grows suspicious. The disinterested nature of a cow's emotions towards a haystack must, I am afraid, always be subject to criticism. It is, at least, peculiar if one who had such a keen enjoyment of the grosser material pleasures, as Horace plainly had, was in no way eager for money, which is the normal way of procuring them. Horace undoubtedly wrote poetry to order; he produced patriotic ballads, carefully cut, carefully dried.³ His friend Virgilius was, as we know, paid by the line for one famous passage, not indeed as the result of any previous agreement. But assume that Horace's friendship with his patron, and even with his patron's patron, was what he declares it to be, one may acquit him on the score of his relations with his rich and powerful friends, can one acquit him as to his attitude towards his poorer acquaintances? No doubt Horace despised consulships and things of that kind. He might well despise them, for he was not in a position to get them. Neither did Horace own any granaries in which to store Libyan harvests. He could preach unsullied friendship to the great. But what was his attitude

¹ See *Satires*, Bk. II, 6, ll. 30-60.

² . . . *tu pulses omne quod obstat
ad Maecenatem memori si mente recurras.*

—Horace, *Satires*, Bk. II, 6, l. 30.

³ See Odes 1 to 6 of Bk. III and Odes 4, 5, 14 and 15 of Bk. IV, and the statement of Suetonius on the point.

towards the men just beneath him in his own class, that is the real test? His father was a freedman. He himself had been a government clerk. What is his attitude towards government clerks and towards freedmen? The government clerk turns up several times in his writings, always for contemptuous reference. Could anything, for instance, be more hurtful to the feelings of a rising poet, once a commissioned officer, like Horace, than to address him by his Christian name, and ask him to attend a meeting of civil servants.¹ He lets us know his sentiments on the matter; whilst as for freedmen, his father's class, he commends Maecenas' rule of making no social distinctions in his friendships, *provided only the persons are not mere freedmen*.² Save that the ambit of exclusion is less, this is very like the suggestion underlying so much English literature—all Thackeray's benevolencies, for instance—that no social distinctions be made, *provided only* the persons are gentlemen, that is, belong to the "public school-university" class. At any lower depth no organism can exist socially.

Snobbery, like egoism, is much more tolerable on paper than in real life. Horace is, of course, one of the most agreeable of human writers; he was quite right in prophesying for himself an everlasting popularity; if anything he underestimated his immortality;³ his defects are indeed in large parts his qualities. But a great development took place both in Horace and in Virgil from the time when they first joined the Maecenas set. The set itself probably

¹ "*de re communi scribae magna atque nova te orabant hodie meminisses, Quinte, reverti.*"

—Horace, *Satires*, Bk. II, 6, 36.

² *cum referre negas, quali sit quisque parente*

natus, dum ingenuus . . . —Horace, *Satires*, Bk. I, 6, 8.

³ . . . *dum Capitolium*

scandet cum tacita virgine pontifex.

—Horace, *Odes*, Bk. III, 30, ll. 8-9.

improved and became more serious. In the absence of actual knowledge, one may hazard the conjecture that some of its more prominent and popular members succumbed to their social qualities at an early age. I wonder if Vibidius and Balatro lived long, or did death come to avenge their damnable drinking.

The work of the real men of genius in the circle shows a steady rise in tone. A recent writer has compared Rudyard Kipling to Theocritus.¹ Without suggesting any personal comparison to Horace—I should think they have little in common—one may from the literary point of view cite Kipling as an interesting example of a writer of the attractively commonplace and even the low, who, when the occasion called for it, developed a noble rhetoric in the service of his government. This is what happened in the case of Virgil and Horace. Virgil, having been at first a light writer, devoted himself to the cause of government agriculture, presumably at a certain profit to himself. From agriculture he went on to patriotism, and finally became the most glorious rhetorician of all the ages, exhibiting a combination of dignity and imagination that no other writer has approached. Bourke would be *similis*, but not *secundus*. Horace was less fortunate. His state poems lack the grandeur of Virgil, though they contain lines that have become immortal, as, for instance, the hackneyed "*Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori.*"²

It was in his translations or imitations of the Greek lyric writers, whichever they are—we scarcely have evidence sufficient to decide—that Horace attained his highest point. As Mr. Wilkins puts it, "he clothed in language of unequalled felicity commonplace reflections on a narrow range of topics."³

¹ A paper read at the National University by Mr. Murphy, Secretary of the Classical Association of University College, Dublin.

² Horace, *Odes*, Bk. III, 2, 13.

³ *Introduction to Epistles*, p. xviii.

The verdict of Horace's fellow republican, Thomas MacDonagh, is very similar. MacDonagh was a careful student of Horace, and refers to him six times in his last book.

Modern European criticism (he says) has adopted, with whatever modifications, canons drawn from the works of Greek and Latin literature. . . . It has not broken from the hypnotism of their old conventions. . . . Some odes of Horace, with no philosophy and no emotional appeal, are still traditionally admired. The admiration is in fact due to the influence of the conventional criticism, which drew its canons originally from work of the tradition in which the poet wrote, and which now applies those canons to that work. In part also it is due to the influence of the known personality. We think of him in terms of his *urbanitas* and his *curiosa felicitas*; still he may prophecy as of old:

*Ego postera
crescam laude recens,*

for always we admire his modernness, a quality which may as well be shown in the interpretation of some ancient artificiality which has lived on into our modern civilization; as in the expression of some old natural *emotion* of the heart of man.¹

That is the best that can be said of Horace. A poet, as we ordinarily understand it, he certainly was not. His odes, as MacDonagh put it, are "merely fine words well set and not poetry at all."² Goethe has said the same. He had no "vision"; still less was he, what he believed himself to be, a philosopher. Few men, indeed, have ever had a less philosophical mind than Horatius Flaccus. As with FitzGerald of *Omar Khayyam*, his views, if taken,

¹ *Literature in Ireland*, p. 104.

² *Ibid.*, p. 121.

seriously, are not merely the negation of philosophy, but almost the negation of life. Both men (the enthusiasms of Horace's youth being at an end) flourished at a dead point in life, in a sort of "pocket" of existence, a period of complete disillusionment. It is only at such a time that men can preach a purely static conception of that eternally moving thing which we call life. It is perhaps because they appeal to all men in the static moments of existence, in the moral backwash of life, that both writers are so popular.

There is a famous passage in the works of Newman,¹ in which he speaks of men coming back in later years to the classics after the experience of life. They then recognize, he says, the truth of that to which they had formerly given only a notional assent. In the case of Horace I must confess to an opposite experience, if I am as yet entitled to have one. Coming back now after fifteen or twenty years to works of which I was once an eager student, I feel them much less true now than I then did. The pagan negative is far more attractive to an active young man in his 'teens than to one who has had some actual experience of life, who has come to recognize the necessity of that higher gospel of existence which was destined to supplant the perversions and platitudes of Horace and his friends. But *tenuēs grandia*. We are getting into the deep water of philosophy. It is enough if in this essay I have drawn attention to an aspect of Horace's character and writings that is sometimes overlooked.

¹ *Grammar of Assent* (1892 ed.), p. 78.

THE THEATRE: ITS EDUCATIONAL VALUE¹

To make one of the notorious offenders of history a subject of panegyric is said to have been a favourite exercise with the sophists. When one considers some of the indictments brought against the theatre at various times, one cannot help thinking his task seems no very different one. For, when I write of the educational value of the theatre, I mean the living theatre—the stage with the actors upon it. That plays themselves have, when read, a value, no excess of fanaticism has ever attempted to deny; admission has rendered argument unnecessary. But it is not the perfect, lifeless organism, but the living being, capable alike of evil and exaltation, that it will be our task to consider.

Between the play acted and the play written the gulf is very wide: for in reading the text of a drama we rather see where beauty was intended than feel it and delight in it ourselves. The action dies. The quick retort grows pointless. A printed direction is all that remains of blinding tears. Yet dulled as are our feelings, our judgment is even more at fault. Single speeches pall on us because we have forgotten those others that make them pertinent. We estimate each action by itself and not in reference to the character deduced from all his actions. From this faulty appraisement, acting saves us. It is the actor's duty to synthetize, to give in one performance what can only be obtained by many readings, to fill each word with life, making the speeches their own

¹ A paper read at University College, Dublin, in 1898.

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commentary: in a word, like Pygmalion, to make of marble, man.

Yet from all the arts acting has ever been singled out by prejudice for its onslaughts. These attacks have been of two kinds. To the first class belong those unreasoning diatribes which still emanate from that most narrow-minded of all societies, the lower middle-class of England, interesting only as a survival of those prejudices which led Cromwell to break church windows and brought Sir Hudibras' wrath upon performing bears. In such productions argument soon gives place to anathema. They talk of the theatre as under the ban of heaven. In Pandemonium they see an opera-house. For them the fires of Tartarus are slaked with orange-juice and fed with sawdust.

There is a form of objection to the theatre, rational in itself and deserving to be met, not by denial but by argument. Those who put it forward hold that the admitted deterioration of the stage in modern times has robbed it of its usefulness. That the stage had at one time a great value, alike artistic and ethical, few reasonable enquirers can deny. The high estimation put upon the theatre by the Greeks as an instrument of virtue is a matter of common knowledge. Reflecting, however, that much that was then considered as appertaining to piety is now placed in the category of vice, it is perhaps better to leave aside considerations drawn from this source and have recourse to a far stronger support. We can cite the fact that the theatre in more recent times was founded by the Church itself. From the old mystery plays, themselves direct developments of the dramatic elements in the Mass, through the morality plays down to the present-day theatre the tradition is unbroken. To deny a value to the stage in former times involves a condemnation alike of mediæval piety and renaissance art.

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Between the drama of Shakespeare and the Renaissance, however, and the drama of the present day, the difference in point of excellence is admittedly very great. It is, at first sight, not an unreasonable deduction, that where there has been such great deterioration, all educational value must have departed. But this reasoning leaves out of sight the fact that even an inferior production of our own day will affect us far more powerfully than a masterpiece of former times. For it speaks to us in our own language. It uses the illustrations of our own time and circumstances. Every point tells home. *Æneas* steers his trireme through a dignified oblivion. We give up our night's rest to accompany Sherlock Holmes on his steamer-chase down the river.

True as this is of literature, of the stage it is especially true. For one of the chief purposes of the stage is to affect us by substituting the particular for the general. It is not abstract ambition, not the hazy character of a forgotten historical past but the living man Macbeth, that meets us at the theatre and for a time seems to form a part of our lives. If, then, the stage gains its effect by the particular, making, as it does, its artistic generalization seemingly particular to ourselves, a scene of present-day life and conversation will move us far more powerfully than one taken from a remote cycle. The chloroformed handkerchief is more terrible than the poisoned ring.

The theatre, then, should affect us, but what should be the ultimate object of its so doing? Adopting the ancient theory, I maintain that in affecting and amusing us the proper end of the theatre should be to produce elevation. This I hold the present-day theatre in large part does. But there are certain broad exceptions.

First, all those pieces which simply amuse, catering to the taste of those persons who refuse the actor

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any other faculty than that of provoking laughter and see in the proscenium but an enlargement of Punchinello. Chief among such pieces is the musical farce.

True comedy often elevates by its delicacy and beauty: in it that chastening effect gained by the generalization of faults is never absent. But the class of production of which the musical farce¹ is the latest and worse development seeks amusement as its only object, and to that object very seldom attains.

Further, let us exclude that product of dilute Ibsenism, the problem-play. To do so may perhaps seem strange; for we are accustomed to hear such plays belauded as the great teaching-force of the modern stage. This, however, is only the revival of an old fallacy. The theory that art should teach has long been exploded. Neither Sophocles nor Shakespeare ever sought to point morals. Their object was to elevate. Hence, in their hands even a plot of an unpleasant nature is, by the method of treatment, turned to good. In Mr. Pinero's dramas, on the contrary, elevation is held of no account. Everything is sacrificed to inculcating some well-worn precept. Yet the lesson taught by the fifth act is but a sorry reparation for the debasing effect of the other four. The author advises virtue, his play teaches vice.

To the problem-play must be added the sensational drama, a class of production which seeks effects of no higher character than such as are produced by the bull-fight and the prize-ring. Yet in speaking of the sensational drama the reference is not so much to the blood-and-thunder productions of the Ambigu, Drury Lane, or our own Queen's, as those card-games, auctions, and similar mechanical expedients with which Mr. Alexander enthralls his patrons. Not

¹ *Revues* had not then been invented.

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that he is not a good actor, even if overrated by female audiences on account of his personal attractions; but, like many other able men, he is given to sacrificing art to gain, Shakespeare to Pinero.

After such large exceptions it may seem that very little remains behind. But there will be found a very considerable core, all the more valuable for this paring. First, we have the revivals of Shakespeare, which for the playgoer give his production a life which the mere reader can never appreciate. Side by side with these is the frequent production of what are known as "old English comedies," despite their Irish authorship. Moreover, there is another class of play which belongs peculiarly to the modern world: those plays that produce elevation through the Christian virtues of humility and kindness, virtues which ancient critics would have despised, and to which Christianity may be said to have first accorded that rank. As instance, I would take that old and simple yet moving comedy of Sydney Grundy, homely as its title, *A Pair of Spectacles*, in which an audience is made to walk not in the paths of patriotism or some greater virtue, but in those of charity. Indeed, as far as the native theatre is concerned, comedy, as in later Athens, is at a far higher level than the graver art. Mr. Gilbert's humour seems justly destined to outlast any of the more serious productions of Carton or Henry Arthur Jones.¹

Another tendency, however, has recently shown itself in the modern theatre, and deserves all encouragement. The production of serious drama has been subject to a far smaller decline in other countries, as, for instance, France, than it has in these countries. This has, in later years, been recognized in England. As a result a very praiseworthy

¹ It has done so.

readiness is shown at the present day, not only to translate such works, but also to perform them in the original tongue. Such a practice may be considered unpatriotic by Englishmen; but in this country, where we are more cosmopolitan, it can meet with nothing but approval. The effect of Henrik Ibsen is evil, but whilst such a piece as Coppée's *For the Crown* can be seen on our boards, we can still congratulate ourselves that that high ideal elevation which has at all times been the acme of stage production still exists in our theatres. Whilst Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac* shows an elevating reunion of the drama and poetry which in the English theatre have so long been unhappily divorced.

The consideration of foreign drama leads us to another proposition. Is there any way in which we might obtain a larger share of these ideal productions than is doled out to us by our British neighbours? For it is the most unsatisfying feature of the present-day stage that there alone is Ireland consistently and unblushingly treated, not as a country, but a province; yet not alone are the Irish, like the French, by nature actors, but Congreve, Macklin, Goldsmith, and Sheridan, the authors of the best English comedies—comedies that can compare with those of any other language—were one and all Irishmen. In more recent times, Dion Boucicault, Sheridan Knowles and the author of the *Story of Waterloo* in our own day are again our countrymen. Nay, had our ancestors known English in the sixteenth century, perhaps even the immortal bard might have found a rival.

Even at the present day, I think, had we a national stage, it would soon soar above that materialism with which the contemporary British stage is in large part blighted. In regard to comedies, indeed, there would soon be very little comparison; whilst as to tragedy, though the sublimity of Sophocles

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might be above us, yet the pathos of Euripides would soon find disciples, perhaps even disciples fit to rival their master.¹ Ireland is still possessed of a virgin genius: grant but an opportunity to her writers of working free from the trammels of another nation's taste, a splendid era of theatrical production will be one of the first results. I do not, however, suggest as an expedient those proposals for corporation-governed theatres, with which Mr. Irving used to garnish his foundation stones. A municipal council, though essentially selective, is not necessarily artistic. Even Aristotle's purging of the passions is not especially the province of the Public Health Department.

My remedy is a different—perhaps a somewhat visionary—one. I would revive the ancient system of university theatres. I would establish a university theatre where plays might be enacted, not as a means of displaying that elaborate scenic paraphernalia which chokes dramatic production in present-day London as in later Rome, but rather like the performance of the *Comédie Française*, as a mode of education. Advancing even a step further than the *Comédie Française* we might have not only a vigorous native drama, vigorous particularly in comedy, but the best productions of other countries, performed in the original. Were such a theatre established in Ireland fit audiences would not long be wanting.

In conclusion, then, I suggest that the theatre in England was once a great factor in that elevation of the mind which is the chief business of education, that play-writing has since decayed, but that the plays of to-day make up in their effects for their loss of excellence by their use of the language and illustrations of our own time. Hence, even in the stage of the present day there is much still valuable, whilst

¹ The revival was shortly after to come at the Abbey.

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the revival of Shakespeare and of old English, or rather old Irish, comedy, together with the production of foreign plays from those countries in which theatrical production still flourishes, bring within our reach the stage in its highest form. But whilst holding that the present-day stage is useful, I admit that it could be exalted and improved, and in no way better than by allowing a native theatre to Ireland, whose genius is still unexhausted, and where many of those conditions are still to be found that produced the drama of Elizabeth and of Greece. In such an event I am confident that the drama would once again vindicate its place as the highest of the arts, and that even in ourselves it would find not its critics but its audience.

THE RELIGIOUS ASPECT OF WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE¹

Women's Suffrage has of late been treated of from many points of view, but its religious aspect has been but little dealt with. Of its moral aspect one hears often enough. Opponents of women's suffrage usually state that whilst they refuse the vote to women, yet—the word “yet” is the part of the statement perhaps hardest to comprehend—*yet* they cherish a higher ideal of womanhood than that entertained by those who would give them the franchise. This higher ideal would, it is said, of a certainty be destroyed, or at least impaired, if woman were led into the evil practice of voting. The fine flavour, the higher and nobler aspects of woman's nature, the subtler and more delicate *nuances* of female character—in a word, all the unworldliness of womanhood would perish and be replaced by a debased exultation in a sordid struggle. Woman's moral nature must inevitably perish in the new excitement. All this would come about from women “voting.”

Now “vote” is a term almost peculiar to the English language. Other tongues employ some such familiar word as “voice” for the purpose. Hence there is no extravagance in supposing a foreigner, or even a native Irish speaker, to be perplexed by such a term. Supposing him, then, to

¹ This essay, originally published in the *Irish Review*, is now out of date. The Suffrage cause has triumphed—one of the few movements of liberation that has. It may, however, be interesting to compare the forecast with the reality.—A.E.C.

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seek to discover the meaning of this new term "voting," from the context, as foreigners commonly must, at what conclusion would he arrive? He would hear that "voting" was a newly-conceived and terrible instrument, for the moral ruin and social debasement of women, that women had hitherto lived lives of holy retirement in sculleries and other peaceful places; but that voting was ruining their homes, destroying their morals, embittering their dispositions, making their manners savage and their tempers quarrelsome, that "voting" distracted woman's thoughts from household affairs, provided a motive of dissension in every domestic circle and roused that deadliest of passions, the lust of conquest, the desire to humble those opposed to you in the dust. "Voting" did, or would do, all these things. It would require little imagination on the part of the foreigner or Irish speaker to conclude that a practice (whatever it was) which led to results so deadly and so permanent, must at least be a practice very frequently indulged in. He would most probably believe that people gave themselves up to "voting" three or four times a week and continued "voting" into the late hours of the night or the early hours of the morning—hence its moral disrepute. On the whole, he would, we fancy, come to the conclusion that "voting" was some new form of game, something like "bridge." He might, perhaps, wonder why the admonition to abstain from it was confined to one sex.

As to the comparative merits of "bridge" and of "voting" as moral agencies, I need only say that my position is quite reasonable. I desire no exceptional treatment, no special preference for "voting," as compared with its rival vice. And, though scarcely a friend of bridge, I would give my whole-hearted support to any movement which had as its object to enable women—and men—to devote

half an hour every five, or even every three, years to playing bridge. The resulting disturbance of their emotions and disarrangement of their ordinary occupations I should regard as an inevitable evil, to which even the least opportunist statesman must on rare occasions be prepared to submit. In this way "bridge" and "voting" would be placed upon an exact equality. As to the comparative utility of the one occupation and the other, I make no point. I speak only of their immediate effect upon morals. As to the moral effect of political practices other than voting, no question of course at present arises, since from the Ladies' Land League to the Primrose League women have at all times been encouraged to indulge in political practices of all kinds, voting excepted.

The religious aspect of women's suffrage is a more serious matter, and the political developments of the past year or two have made it especially so. The likelihood of a measure of universal suffrage at no distant date has set many people to do their political sums anew. The proposal to extend the political system of continental Europe, or the more advanced part of it, to these islands has suggested that it may mean the extension of its politics as well, and that the continent of Europe is by no means so far away as many sober-minded inhabitants of Great Britain and Ireland placed it in their political geography. No doubt manhood suffrage already exists in the United States, but it must not be forgotten that when once manhood suffrage is adopted in these islands, there is no such barrier as the American constitution to stand between the people, thus newly defined, and its will, whatever that will may be.

That the difference between even a rather broad, though thoroughly unscientific, system of franchise, such as that now existing amongst us, and complete manhood suffrage, is not a merely formal or nominal

one, may be shown by a very simple political example. Those of us who read the newspapers are familiar with the phrases, "Catholic Belgium" and "Infidel France." These, of course, refer to the religious character of the Government in the one country and the unreligious, and even until very recently, anti-religious nature of the administration in the other. But it is too often forgotten that the real difference between the small country and the great is in large part a difference of franchise. In Belgium, as in France, feeling runs high upon matters connected with religion, but the Catholic party have for a number of years past held their power by a narrow margin of votes. They have indeed improved their position at the last election. One need not assert that the Belgian character is the same as the French, or that an alternative government would, if returned to power, copy the French ministry in every particular. It is enough to point out that if property were to lose its additional votes in Belgium, and the system of manhood suffrage, which we may see adopted in Great Britain and Ireland before long, were to be introduced in that country, the present Government would almost to a certainty fall from power and a wholly novel situation come into being. Without indulging in prophecy, one can safely assert that were the French franchise assimilated to that of Belgium, or the Belgian franchise to that of France, the difference of temper between the governments of the two countries would be much less marked than it is under existing conditions. It is a grave mistake to assume that the effects of a change in franchise are limited to the polling booths.

But there is another extension of franchise which has often been mooted in France, but towards which French politicians of what are called "advanced views" have usually shown a determined hostility—namely, the concession of woman suffrage. It might

be imagined that when one added the essentially logical character of the French mind to the profoundly democratic nature of French political theory, the inevitable conclusion of womanhood suffrage must result. But it does not. And the reason is by no means mysterious. Upon the mind of every modern French politician of "advanced" opinions there operates, in this matter, a motive much stronger than his adherence to democratic theory—namely, his deep-seated opposition to religion and religious influence. And he refuses any concession to woman in this matter, precisely because he sees, in that clear and wholly unsentimental way in which French people view things, both good and evil, that votes given to women would be votes given to his enemies, votes given to the Church.

It would, of course, be sufficiently laughable to suggest that either in France, or indeed any other country, all women are religious. Yet the politician is not mistaken in his rough estimate—politicians seldom are mistaken in rough estimates—that in the bulk women are on the side of religion. The true and real devotion of women to the religion which they profess, is one of the salient features of Western civilization; nor can it in our day be explained away by the old-fashioned theory, still popular among French unbelievers, of educational differences between men and women. In the classes where religious fervour is most to be found, there is nowadays little difference in the curricula of male and female education.

Perhaps it is an impertinence, especially for men, to seek to afford any reason for what is almost a primary fact. But two causes, at any rate, suggest themselves as accounting for the greater religious fervour of woman. First, that woman's nature is more spiritual, more self-sacrificing, much less sunk in material pleasure than that of men. And secondly,

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viewing the matter on a somewhat lower plane, woman feels a more urgent need of that protection which religion affords than man does. It is the great work of religion to combat vice. Now, it is no exaggeration to say that women have to bear the brunt of the vices of the world, especially of its coarser vices. Who pays the penalty of the great lower-class vice of drunkenness, for instance, to give the most mentionable example? Is it strange that, apart from any higher reason at all, women should cling desperately to that which seeks to avert or to mitigate so dire an evil, whether the religion finds its instrument in the Catch-my-Pal button or the Sacred Heart badge. It is interesting to remark that many men dread feminine influence for just the same reason that they dread religious influence. A fear lest their coarser vices should be hampered is often one of the strongest motives in stirring men to oppose women's suffrage. And all the great vested interest of vice is commonly ranged against woman's suffrage.

Of course vicious men are not the only opponents of women's suffrage. Its most numerous opponents are a body of persons, for the most part of irreproachable conduct, the great cohort of henpecked husbands. They are to be found even in high places, and to them fall to be added the victims of household tyranny, whether motherly or sisterly. Such persons seek, in a furious opposition to women's suffrage, the only possible revenge for repeated domestic humiliations.

I have said enough to show that the political influence of women is, from a religious point of view, a profoundly important influence—important, both indirectly in its influence upon vice, especially coarse vice—and directly in its influence on religion itself. It is owing to the suppression of this influence in politics that the extraordinary phenomenon of the

persecution of a national church becomes possible. The women pray; the men persecute. Under a system of complete manhood and womanhood suffrage, such a result must be almost impossible. For a church that had neither women nor men to support it could not well be persecuted. There would be no church left to persecute. Whilst all history shows that a strong-minded and sincere minority—and in religious matters women will always be sincere—possessing the franchise is quite capable of protecting its religious practices and beliefs against any governmental oppression. The reason nowadays that the persecution of churches can be successfully accomplished is that the greatest body of the sincere and earnest supporters of the church are excluded from political power, through disability of sex.

An interesting discussion as to the possibility of religious persecution, or "bullying" as someone has put it, under self-government has recently been in progress. The likelihood of such a result is not seldom assumed on both sides. One set of combatants complain of the probable bullying of Protestantism. Those who answer them often hint, rather ambiguously of course, that the Catholic Church will be bullied instead. Personally, I look upon this last result as very unlikely. Putting it at the lowest, the religious hatreds of East Ulster will for years to come be a sufficient stimulant to prevent the Catholic majority from growing indifferent. Whatever danger there is to religion in Ireland would come, not from self-government, but from a closer incorporation into the English democracy, under the system of the Union. When the people of Ireland had come to read the English Press seven days in the week, then a franchise like that of France in a really United Kingdom that exalted ultra-democratic ideas and weakened national tendencies, might constitute a real danger to religion. The English system of education, for

instance, would, in such a case, almost certainly be extended to Ireland. Some may think, however, that even if accompanied by self-government, manhood suffrage has dangers.

I do not share that view, but rather welcome this extension of democracy, if it be real democracy; if the conception of "Demos" is not one that, as in France, excludes half the nation. If we sometimes see a democracy lead us a strange dance, it is because it is dancing without a partner. Man and woman are natural complements in political functions, as in the other relations of life. The clear commonsense of woman, and her close touch with the realities of life, those stern realities which we call house, food and clothes, this office and that attribute peculiarly fit women to exercise a restraining influence on the vagaries of an universal electorate. We have all heard of the fable of the belly and the members. The former has come into the greater respect in our times. But a changed metaphor is needed in present circumstances. In government by an universal male electorate, we see the functioning of half an organism; no wonder the result is indigestion. And indigestion has ever been the mother of discontent.

There is a very old trite motto, so old and trite that the mention of it must inevitably sound funny, and yet, owing to its very triteness, showing that it touches a deep chord in the human heart—"What is home without a mother?" Put it a little further. The mother *is* the Home. And when the father is out drinking, or out blaspheming, I claim a vote for the homes. Once the voice—the true voice of the homes—is heard at the polls, we need have no fear of any change of suffrage.

IRELAND, IRISH AND OTHERWISE

(A LECTURE TO AN IRISH IRELAND AUDIENCE)

There has just been celebrated the silver wedding of the Pale and the Gael, the twenty-fifth year of the Irish movement. The celebration took on a strange form, its official suppression. But the thing that mattered was that the movement had lasted twenty-five years. A great many Chief Secretaries and Lords Lieutenant have ridden up Cork Hill and driven down it again in that period. Things have been moving all the time. Colum, or Kieran, has grown to manhood, *Órígíó* and *Máire* are married. To the new generation the Gaelic movement is an ultimate fact; a thing that seems to have lasted forever. They never remember a time when there was not a Gaelic League.

It is an ultimate fact. What sort of a fact is it? To the older generation it is different. We saw the sunrise. We watched the first struggle with the clouds. Learning Irish was in our day a very different process from studying French or Latin or Greek. We were "alive in that dawn," and drank of the first enthusiasm, deep or shallow as our nature was, but it was wine all the time. What a wild hope was that of twenty years ago: to revive a dying nation through its language. The schoolboy of to-day who gets slapped with the same melancholy resignation for missing his Irish, as for neglecting his algebra, must look on matters in a very different light. The dawn with its magic colours is long past,

and the noonday sun, as it scorches you, is a very commonplace object. Only when it is veiled by dark clouds do we think of it at all.

The star of Irish Ireland, when it first shone forth in our sky, was, and still is, a five-pointed one: language, industries, music, dancing and games. Literature falls under language, music includes song. Of the five points, only two were in any sense novel—language and dancing. The worst enemies of Ireland, just as they admired our scenery, had usually appreciated our music, as far as they were able, which was not as a rule very far. For to appreciate Irish song, without a knowledge of Gaelic, is a hopeless task. I have occasionally met people whose dislike of Irish manufacture extended even to our music; but these are the people who would prefer foreign grapes to home grapes. The advocacy of Irish industries is, of course, as old as Dean Swift and as new as the latest Chief Secretary. The great movement, which has captured most of what is best in Irish manhood for native games and sports, goes back to 1884, the days of Croke and Cusack, the period of the land war. Only the lowest classes in Dublin, and also the upper-middle and a small part of the lower-middle class of Dublin, and some other towns stand aside from Irish games. The rest of the country is solid in their favour. It is often thought nowadays that the Gaelic Athletic movement is in some way the fruit of the Gaelic League or Irish Ireland movement. It belongs to the previous generation.

The characteristic of the Irish Ireland movement, as it came to be known, was that it combined all these diverse and yet related elements into a single rule of life, giving to language study a place in the national programme, which it had never held before. For it made Gaelic its key-note, insisting on the importance and practicability of the study and use

of Irish by every Irish Nationalist. It thus substituted for, or at least added to, the purely political concept of national endeavour then in vogue, a complexus of duties, activities and enthusiasms covering a very wide area and penetrating into the deepest recesses of our social life. Under the impulse of a single aim, it made war on many different fronts, carrying on a number of campaigns with varying fortunes, all directed to a common purpose, to save the national soul of Ireland. It was in this way that an importance seemingly disproportionate came to be attached by the new movement to quite trifling things, a dance, a song, a game, much as men cherish the feasts and fasts or pious observances of a faith, not for themselves, but as sentinels of that for which they stand. Among Irish Irelanders it became no venial matter to eat apples from an un-Irish tree. For the battle for any one point was looked upon as the battle for all. This was the strength of the new movement. It would tolerate no harpists clothed in English shoddy, or cricketers studying Irish, or hurlers singing music-hall songs. No one has ever yet ventured to waltz at an Irish college. My friend and frequent editor, Mr. D. P. Moran, in his brilliant philosophy of Irish Ireland and in the weekly paper in which he hammered home its doctrines did much to win acceptance for this point of view. The name IRISH IRELAND itself very justly expresses it.

The new movement drew its strength from discipline and self-restraint. Discipline can rouse as deep a fervour as liberty. It has made more converts in every age. Once its forces were fairly mobilized, about the turn of the century, they advanced with the irresistible onset of a conquering army. The movement spread like wildfire through the country. But after a time the onset slackened; resistance gathered from various quarters. When the first

fervour had passed, say about the middle of the first decade of the century, the advance of Irish Ireland may be said to have been held up. The opposition sprang from various causes. Each point in the Irish Ireland programme hurt somebody. One man wanted his socks and another his songs. One man wanted Rugby football and another two steps. They all wanted ease, without study. The Irish Ireland movement called on them to abandon all these things. It was not so much that they became actively hostile to Irish Ireland—though some did—but rather they admired it as we admire heroic virtue from a safe distance. Men came to have the same sort of patronizing admiration for Irish Ireland as, say, for the monks of Mount Melleray.

When the advance of Irish Ireland, to continue the martial metaphor, was held up, its forces did what any other forces would do in the circumstances. They dug themselves in, and a sort of trench warfare may be said to have ensued ever since. Certain territory the Irish Ireland forces occupied very firmly; within that territory their will prevailed, but the Ireland that was Irish came to be separated from the Ireland that was otherwise by a very clear line of demarcation, a line of severance not less well marked because it divided men's souls and not the solid earth.

Within the territory of Irish Ireland, the Gaelic language was fairly widely spread. Men read Irish papers, or at least papers that wrote about Irish. As for class distinction, the only class they troubled themselves about were language classes. It was not true, as native speakers believed, that all Irish Irelanders rode bicycles and said *tá bpeaḡ*, but they had other peculiarities. They could all dance and dance well. They said they never waltzed, but one sometimes had doubts about the truth of the statement. They could all sing. If some sang strangely,

well, perhaps it was a very special kind of *pean-nór*. "Irish Irelanders" were not all poets or hurlers (or poetesses and experts at *camógúirdeáct*) but the proportion of poets and even of hurlers among them was larger than that in the outer world. In reality, cycling was the pastime of the Irish Irelander rather than any more traditional sport. Irish Irelanders were usually temperate, often total abstainers, always earnest, self-sacrificing, of high character. This is the army that, for near a quarter of a century, has held the trenches of Irish Ireland.

But what of the other Ireland, that paradox, un-Irish Ireland. We may for the moment leave out of account the Unionists huddled in the far distance. They have a dim Ireland of their own, a thing so faint and tenuous that it is little more than a shadow cast across the face of Britain, and yet they cling, sometimes even cling passionately, to this shadow. The other Ireland, lying beyond the lines of the Gael, is far from being Unionist, whatever else it may be. A Unionist at an election cannot poll ten votes, male or female, out of its population. It is sincerely anti-Unionist; but it comprises every variety of political opinion from the out and out rebel to the most stodgy Whig. When I speak of the rebel perhaps some of you will think of that cunning play, *Sable and Gold*, produced at the Abbey Theatre a few weeks ago, in which one character, Gregory, an Irish Irelander of over-tense nerves, who in the end proves a coward, is contrasted with Paul, a representative of that other uncaring Ireland of which I now speak, who meets death with courage. If this contrast is intended as typical, it certainly is not supported by the facts. No one can say that Irish Irelanders have shown themselves wanting in courage. The profession of anti-national and anti-militarist sentiments is not usually associated with military qualities. But for good or for evil,

Paul in the play does stand for a great class, perhaps the largest class of our fellow-countrymen, sound at heart, but only at heart. Or would it be more true to say that every Irishman has in him a Paul and a Gregory, a striver after ideals and a complacent cynic. It depends upon which half of him gets the upper hand. In *Irish* Ireland one type prevails, in "otherwise" Ireland the cynics and the complacents have it all their own way. A short holiday this summer, which circumstances ordained should be divided almost equally between a well-known Irish college and an equally well-known seaside resort, brought me sharply up against the contrast of the two civilizations. It might have been Rostrevor and Omeath, or Cloghaneely and Bundoran, or Spiddal and Salthill, or perhaps it was somewhere else altogether. At any rate there was only one thing in which the college and the seaside resort agreed, that is politics. Both were Sinn Féin. Or rather there were two; for both college and resort were fond of picnics.

In everything else they were in sharp disagreement. The college was of course situate in the territory of "Irish Ireland," both morally and physically; in fact it was not very far from its capital. The seaside resort lay in "otherwise" Ireland. There were Irish Irelanders in the resort, strong "Irish Irelanders." One met them and spoke to them in Gaelic. But the Irish Irelanders in the resort were as thoroughly suppressed as the "otherwise Irelanders"—I am sure there were some—in the Irish College. One man in a bathing costume is no match for ten men—and still less for ten women. At first sight the pre-occupations of the college and the resort, even apart from picnics, seemed alike. The college talked, the resort talked; the college sang, the resort sang; the college danced, the resort danced. The college danced the Walls of Limerick

and the Waves of Tory, and attempted the High Call Cap. The resort danced the half-time waltz and the one step, and attempted the Fox Trot. An Irish dance would have been an impossibility there, or at least an "unthinkability." There must have been nearly as much Irish in the neighbourhood of the seaside resort as in the neighbourhood of the college—it was in an Irish-speaking county—but no one ever spoke Irish there except by stealth. In the college they spoke English by stealth, and sometimes danced the Barn Dance and the Lancers by stealth privately, when the official céilí was over, though I have seen more of this kind of thing in other places. Perhaps the seaside resort harboured some who secretly danced *pinnce pados* in its catacombs; but if such there were, one did not come across them. The college played Hurley ineffectively, the resort played golf, also, I was told, ineffectively. The college sang traditional Irish music, and sang it well, except at unauthorized entertainments, when, as at other colleges, the contributions were by no means traditional. One heard Irish songs at a few private entertainments at the seaside resort. But its public life knew nothing of them, though it was, as has been said, fond of singing, and there must have been Irish traditional singing within a stone's throw.

The resort was, if anything, too fond of music. When one was starting off for one's first swim in the morning—the college boated, the resort swam—one could hear ladies singing about roses in Picardy, and those roses were still blooming musically when one was making for bed in the evening. Or if it was not roses in Picardy, it was some other musical flowers of very similar odour; last year's flowers, English ballads beginning to "date." And then there were the Indian love lyrics. I wonder what Indians think of them. People of less *cultured* taste

sang "Good-bye-ee," and "Oh, Johnny," just as three years ago they informed us musically that she was the only good girl in the world, and that another little drink would not do them any harm. The last statement was plainly untrue. Two years hence they will be singing—heaven only knows what. *Caduca non æterna* is their motto. The most famous Irish poet came from the county in which the seaside resort was situate, but I am quite sure not six people there had ever heard his name.

The customary thing would be to call the inhabitants of the seaside resort *peóimíní*. But if *peóimín* means either a person who seeks to ingratiate himself or herself with the enemies of Ireland, or who pretends to a social position above that which is normally his—its two commonest meanings—it would be an unfair description to apply. There never were men and women who put on less "side" than the people of that resort, the whole spirit of the place was against it; there were scarcely any enemies there to ingratiate yourself with. The people were just "otherwise" Irishmen, people dwelling temporarily or permanently in "otherwise" Ireland. If the Irish college was fairly typical of one side of Ireland, the seaside resort was also typical, typical of a whole side of Irish life, perhaps the largest side.

What are the ideas and tendencies embodied in this other Ireland that is not ours? Some of them, no doubt, are ideas and tendencies that call for the plainest condemnation. In a country situate as ours is there will always be a number of mean and unworthy motives tending to draw men away from the national side. The boycott of Irish games in a number of our schools, to take one instance, is inspired by no motives except those which are mean and unworthy. The playing of un-Irish games by the past pupils of these schools is not necessarily to be attributed to the same motives, because, and this

is what makes the action of such schools so criminal, it is nearly impossible to acquire real skill in any game after fifteen, or even earlier. A boy so trained is condemned, in later years, to choose between athletic inaction and being cut off from the mass of his fellow-countrymen by a strong barrier. I say cut off, for he is truly cut off; it is the unimportant things in life that really count. I knew a man once educated at one of our big schools, who was a promising bowler; he had a leg-break. He became a Gaelic Leaguer and gave it all up for Ireland. Perhaps you don't quite realize the extent of this sacrifice. *You* never had a leg-break; neither had I. But heroes of his kind are rare. As a rule a man prefers his cricket to his country. The young fellow of whom I have spoken is one whose name is now very well known on the national side. His sacrifice, however, meant, as it almost always does mean, his abandoning athletics altogether. His health has been poor ever since.

So much for games. But the seaside resort, for instance, troubled itself little about them, except perhaps about golf, which some people say was introduced by Cuchulain, and others by Arthur Balfour. But then there are people who say Cuchulain was a Liverpool man. What of the other points of the Irish Ireland programme? You can start Irish at any time of life; whether you can finish it is another matter. At any rate you can start dancing at any age up to forty, and the Walls of Limerick is distinctly easier than the "Half-time." It is rather a misfortune that while the charm of Irish dancing is its *élan*, its gracefulness, its intimate association with the music, the whole tendency of current cosmopolitan dancing is the other way. It is slow, purposely ungraceful, and in the case of the dance last mentioned—the most popular one, the Half-time—purposely out of accord with the music. Again, even

if you can't dance, perhaps you can sing. There are many Irish airs quite as easy, and a great deal more tuneful, than the Indian love lyrics. I admit that unlike "Oh Johnny," etc., they are not piping hot from a bakery of song. Even if you *can't* sing, dance, or learn Irish, the most hoarse, clumsy and stupid person can buy a suit of Irish tweeds, and so pay tribute to the Irish Ireland idea. Of course you then meet the difficulty that its no use accepting four points out of the Irish Ireland five. Like Clemenceau's French Revolution Irish Ireland must be accepted *en bloc*. But that is not the whole explanation of what keeps people away from the Irish Ireland trenches.

I come now to a point where I speak with some hesitation. The commonplace man has rather a peculiar feeling towards Irish Ireland and all its works, something I conceive like the feeling that a great many people in religious agreement with Y. M. C. ideals have towards the Young Men's Christian Association. As I said earlier in the lecture, Irish Irelanders are, for the most part, men of high character. That's the difficulty. High character and elevated ideals inevitably carry a suggestion of puritanism and intellectualism. And of all things on earth, these are the two that frighten the commonplace man most. It is bad enough to ask him to attend a class, but to ask him to amuse himself with idealists, male and female, of high character. Nothing will make him do that. You point to the amusements of Irish Ireland, its brightening influences, the fact that the tea is always good at céilís, never at dances. None of those things will take the bad taste out of his mouth, the taste of high character. Its alleged relaxations are much too tight for him; he can't amuse himself that way. In fact it's one of the difficulties of a country situate as Ireland is, that for the middle class at least, it is only the high life, the ideal life,

that is left to the native population and the national side. The commonplace unideal life of card-tables, bars, billiard saloons, music halls, race meetings and betting shops is for the most part conquered by the forces working against the country. That is a tremendous extent of territory to leave in the enemies' hands. The strength of the G.A.A., as distinguished from the other and newer elements of Irish Ireland, is in great part derived from the fact that, while it has an ideal, it has also a large side that is not in the least ideal, but rather makes an appeal to the average human. Ordinary men brought within the ambit of the G.A.A. by circumstances must often be under the same sort of silent compulsion to be Irish, that ordinary men outside its influence are commonly subjected to to make them anti-Irish.

Much of what has gone before is, perhaps, more true of the situation existing a few years ago than of the situation to-day. Events have been working in favour of Irish Ireland, and it has now a tremendous opportunity if it can seize it. It has for the moment the eager sympathy of numberless people outside its own boundaries, in fact of the vast majority of the native population. The man in the "pub." and even the man on the racecourse are in its favour. The national party of the day incorporates its doctrines in its programme. How is it to turn this new situation to account, and make converts of its sympathizers? The old methods and the old programme will hardly do. Even Christianity itself underwent developments in formal unessentials when it came out of the catacombs. I am the first to recognize the great importance of moral qualities and high ideals to any movement, above all to a forward movement. They have been an immense strength to Irish Ireland. But if, to continue our metaphor, the campaign is to pass from a trench warfare to a war of

movement, if Irish Ireland is to conquer the population as a whole—as Sinn Féin has already done in politics—it must be with a rule of life, which, not only enthusiasts and intellectuals, but the population as a whole can live up to. Of course it will have its counsels of perfection, but you must have a place for the inconsistent weakling, who perpetually falls away from national grace. You must put up with the man who is quite willing to have his son taught Irish, but wont learn it himself, who plays the wrong sort of games, sings the wrong sort of songs. Excommunication must become a rare process, only to be invoked for the gravest crimes. In fact you will have to be content with a sound heart, without asking too closely whether it is accompanied by a sound head. Above all you must make it clear that high character, whether high living or high thinking, is *not* a condition of belonging to your communion.

And you must do this freely and not grudgingly. Some may think these very dangerous suggestions, involving as they do, if not a lowering of the flag, at least the relaxation of a discipline that has been the glory of our forces, that has given them so much of their efficiency. So far the suggestions are tentative. They can be worked out by others. But we all feel that a new situation and a new generation has arisen, a generation remarkably tolerant of those who have gone before them, yet having enlarged ideals of its own. With such men and in such a situation, with a sympathy so widespread in favour of the Irish point of view, some change in the rule and the programme that has done service these twenty years is necessary. The golden moment has come at last; the youth of Ireland are eager to be its saviours; but they will save it in their own way.

POLICIES IN IRELAND

For the last hundred years three main policies have been advocated by different parties:

- (1) To drive the English out of Ireland.
- (2) To drive the Protestants out of Ireland.
- (3) To drive everybody out of Ireland.

The three policies have flourished under different names at different times. And at all times they have been more practised than avowed, but in the terminology of our own time, they correspond very roughly to

- (1) Sinn Féin.
- (2) "The Constitutional Movement."
- (3) Unionism.

Sinn Féin would admit the statement of its object just given. Unionism and the late "Constitutional Movement" would, on the other hand, almost certainly deny with heat that they had any purpose of denuding the island of Protestants or of its population respectively. Let us take the case of Unionism first. It is of course only a minority of Unionists who admit to a plain malevolence of motive. Yet, deep embedded in the soul of every Unionist, something of the sort will be found. His motive is founded on a sort of unofficial strategy, probably a very bad strategy. The idea is something like this. The great danger to Great Britain from the position of Ireland is that at some time the island might be occupied by a hostile invading force; but it would be supremely difficult for such a force to keep up its

line of communications by sea. Hence, if Ireland were a desolate and uninhabited island such a force must soon perish ; a desert is one of the best strategic boundaries. (It may be pointed out that this result would in no way prevent mankind from enjoying the admittedly beautiful scenery of the island in peace time, as all the really good Irish scenery lies near the coast, and, as in the case of Greece and Norway, could be visited by a sea-trip.) A desire to see Ireland desolate, uninhabited, and thus strategically safe, is really at the bottom of all Unionism. The late Lord Salisbury was its greatest name, and under his sure guidance the policy attained large success.

During the "twenty years of resolute government," the space intervening between the two viceroyalties of the Aberdeens, not far short of a million persons left Ireland for ever, about a fifth of its population. All Unionists look upon these two decades as the golden age of Unionist policy. Lord Salisbury and his sovereign handed over near a million Irishmen to the United States, much as he handed over Heligoland to Germany. It is only fair to say that in pursuit of the policy of extermination the Unionist Protestant is genuinely unselfish. Like the bee that perishes in stinging, he is quite ready that he and his should perish—and they are in fact exterminated in an even greater proportion than the native population—if only the eventual decivilization and depopulation of Ireland can be brought about. Hence it is that the Unionist Protestant rears his children for export ; has them educated in another country or, if through financial causes that be impossible, brings them up in an intellectual exile from the soil on which they dwell, teaching them that everything around them is noxious, that all good comes from without. He bids them play cricket, because the boys around them play hurley ; if those around them played cricket, he would have them

play lacrosse. He teaches them to avoid native literature. Books must have writers. He teaches them to avoid native manufactures, because manufactures mean men. His whole support always goes out to the evictor. He encourages pasture at the expense of tillage. He drives Plunkett from Parliament. The Unionist negative runs through everything, stops everything, poisons everything. In the last working out Unionism has only one test for every proposal. Will it leave fewer men dwelling in Ireland?

In speaking of Unionist-Protestants, it should be said I refer only to the normal mass who will be found marching with their bishops and moderators on any public question, not to the small number of enlightened individuals, the handful who supported Miss O'Brien on the Conscription question, for instance. Again, the terrible nature of the campaign of destruction does not prevent numberless kind acts between individuals of the two sides like the wild flowers that spring up on a battlefield. A mass hate has little to do with the sentiments of individuals. A propaganda so terrible as that described has very naturally led to a counter-movement—scarcely less terrible and certainly not less successful. Men said to themselves that the only way to deal with an exterminator was to exterminate him. And they did exterminate. It is sometimes said that the late "constitutional movement" gained no successes, that it has nothing to show, that its movement has been cyclic, that at a named point you will find Redmond or Parnell or Butt standing just where O'Connell stood. This is not a fair statement. Unless you confine it to the Home Rule or self-government movement alone, the statement is, in fact, quite untrue. In its real, its unconfessed object, the "constitutional movement" was, up to about ten years ago, very successful, perhaps more successful

even than Unionism. For amidst professions and aspirations for union almost as benevolent as those of Unionists to Ireland, it in effect drove out the Protestant from one vantage point after another, as in the well-arranged operations of a modern battle.

O'Connell found the Protestant in possession of the land, the commercial wealth, the parliamentary representation, the official church and its revenues, the central officialdom, the magistracy and the local government, all education (University, secondary and primary), the bulk of the professions, and all that depended on these things. After a century of the "constitutional movement," mostly a movement of passive or "semi-passive" resistance, and frequently helped indirectly by physical force, from O'Connell down to O'Brien, the Protestant has been driven from his educational monopoly—the University monopoly was broken just over ten years ago—from his religious monopoly, from his monopoly of the magistracy, from the minor ranks of the central officialdom, from the medical, and even in large part from the legal profession. He has been expelled almost completely from the ownership of land, the parliamentary representation and local government. He has lost all that depends upon them. No doubt he is still represented in his just numerical proportion, but that is no use to him, especially as it is usually fairly enlightened men who so represent him. What Protestant ever gave a fig for Protestant Nationalist M.P.'s. *He* was not sucking the orange: a lemon was more to his taste. The Protestant still retains the big positions in the central government, and most of the mercantile wealth—in large part English agency; he has rather improved his position in retail trading. But that and the dwindling purchase money of what was once his land is all that is left to him. A series of movements—O'Connell's Catholic Association, Davitt's Land League, O'Brien's United

Irish League, aided indeed by the aftermath and the ever present possibility of Fenianism, have brought this about. Looked at collectively they fall under the not very fit name of the "constitutional movement."

In driving out Protestants, the "constitutional movement" was most successful. But in the intervals of its successes in this matter it engaged in a movement of quite a different and far more high-souled character, in which its failure was uniform, so uniform, indeed, that it caused its ruin. This movement has assumed diverse forms and gone under different *aliases*: Repeal, Federalism, Home Government, Home Rule, Devolution, Colonial Home Rule. But they have all had this in common. They have proposed to vary the policy of driving the English out of Ireland, by persuading the English to retire from Ireland, in whole or in part; they have depended much on Parliamentary action. None of these efforts has had any success whatever. They have all advanced to a certain point and then come to a sudden stop, whether it was the Clontarf meeting, the Curragh revolt, or—the same stone wall loomed up in each case. The "constitutional movement" has been very effective in moving Protestants, but very ineffective in moving anything else. It failed wholly to move Englishmen. Not only has the Government of King George V a distinctly stronger hold on Ireland than had that of George IV, but in all commercial matters, banks, railways and the like, the hold of the unofficial Englishman has greatly tightened and extended.

The most striking result of the war period has been the cessation of the two movements of extermination. Unionism and the "constitutional movement" (except, of course, in its ineffective, or "Home Rule" phase) both stayed their hands. Indeed the latter may be now said to have gone out of existence. The Protestant has rather improved his position since

the beginning of the war ; in its first months he even became popular and, with a more skilful handling of matters, might have continued so. On the other hand, the extermination of the Irish population, continued for so many years, came to a pause ; Unionism, the real Unionism, was for the moment put out of action. In the stagnation of the two active and successful movements that had so long divided the country, Sinn Féin has progressed enormously. It has, of course, been helped by many adventitious circumstances. It has no religious bitterness. Having few Protestants in its ranks, it has no hatred for them, no desire to expel them. Constitutional agitation cannot flourish without a constitution. The old safety valves of Free Speech and Emigration were sealed up. Agricultural prosperity brought the desire for freedom as it always does. The peasantry of the French Revolution were, it is said, the most prosperous in Europe. Asquith and Maxwell each did their part. It is not proposed here to discuss Sinn Féin. Down to a few years ago it has so long been dormant that it has no such recent history¹ by which to judge it as have the rival policies of " Unionism " and the " constitutional movement." For the last four years they in their turn have slept. Sinn Féin has had the vigour of an awakening. If it succeeds, the day of extermination will have ended for ever. If it fails, doubtless the old policies of extermination, of driving out Irishmen and driving out Protestants will revive.

¹ This was written about a year ago.—A.E.C.



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